

MONTANA Magazine of *HISTORY*

Indian Life
Range Tales
Dodson's Death
Early Sky Pilots
Mark Twain's Visit
Old Whiskey Forts
Judith Basin Tophand
New Books; Western Lore

Spring 1953



MONTANA

Magazine of History

published by
Historical Society
of Montana,
Founded, 1865

To Preserve, Publish, Promote and Perpetuate Montana's History . .

CONTENTS

Howell Harris and the Whiskey Trade.....	1
<i>By Hugh A. Dempsey</i>	
Mark Twain in Montana, 1895.....	9
<i>By Rufus A. Coleman</i>	
Judith Basin Top Hand (W. C. Burnett).....	18
<i>Edited by Michael Kennedy</i>	
Dodson's Death: The Diary of John F. Dodson.....	24
<i>Edited by George F. Weisel</i>	
Kutenai Calendar Records.....	34
<i>By Carling Malouf and Thain White</i>	
Range Day Tales.....	40
<i>Recounted by Warren R. Woodson</i>	
<i>Illustrated by James Masterson</i>	
Cordage of the Early Northwest Indians.....	42
<i>By Jessie L. Duboc</i>	
Montana Medley: Sky Pilots.....	48
<i>By Bob Fletcher</i>	

NEW BOOKS

The Life and Times of Louis Riel.....	54
<i>Reviewed by Norman A. Fox</i>	
Stay Away, Joe.....	54
<i>Reviewed by Anne McDonnell</i>	
Up The Missouri With Audubon.....	55
<i>Reviewed by Claude E. Schaeffer</i>	
Archeology of Eastern United States.....	56
<i>Reviewed by Richard Forbis</i>	
Miscellany	57

EDITORS

K. Ross Toole
Michael Kennedy
Rita McDonald
Albert J. Partoll

EDITORIAL BOARD

Anne McDonnell
Merrill G. Burlingame
Robert H. Fletcher
Norman Winestine
Paul C. Phillips
H. G. Merriam

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Norman Winestine
President
Merrill G. Burlingame
Vice-President
Albert J. Partoll
Secretary
Charles A. Bovey
William R. Mackay
Howard A. Johnson
Josephine I. Hepner
Mrs. A. J. White
Mrs. Jessie Duthie
Judge Ben Harwood
Lena Bissonette
Norman Holter
Lester Loble
Jean Bishop
Sam Gillully

Montana Magazine of History is published quarterly by the Historical Society of Montana, Helena. Subscription rate, including annual membership in the Society, is \$3; single copies \$1. The Society does not assume responsibility for statements made by contributors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless postage is provided. Entered as second class matter at the post office, Helena, Montana.

Spring 1953
Vol. 3 — No. 2
Price \$1.00

978.6
M76m
44877

HOWELL HARRIS AND THE

BY HUGH A. DEMPSEY

WHISKEY TRADE



An era of Montana-Alberta history which has been ignored and often distorted by modern day historians took place between 1869 and 1874 when traders from Fort Benton constructed posts in the North West Territories of Canada.

These posts have been dubbed "whiskey forts" by both Canadian and American writers and today few accurate descriptions of the actual trading conditions are in existence.

One of the men who took part in this trading period and left a record of his activities was Howell Harris, who came to Montana Territory from Missouri as a youth of seventeen. Harris gained an enviable reputation during his lifetime and before his death in about 1935 he had left several written accounts of his part in the "whiskey trading" era.

Since his *Amazing Death of Calfshirt*, in January, Hugh A. Dempsey has established a solid following among readers of the Montana Magazine. A Canadian Government researcher and writer of promise, Mr. Dempsey thus far has graciously confined his published work in the U. S. to this magazine.

Harris was born at St. Louis, Missouri, on April 21, 1846, the son of William and Margaret (nee Thomas) Harris. He travelled overland with his family toward California in 1853, but was detained at Salt Lake because of Indian hostilities. Here the family changed its plans and proceeded to Nevada and later to Idaho, where he lived until 1863.

In that year, at the age of seventeen, Howell Harris first entered Montana Territory, where he worked in the placer mines. In 1868 he went down the Missouri to Fort Benton and began working as a bull whacker. He freighted from Benton to trading posts in Montana and Canada until 1874. After the arrival of the Northwest Mounted Police, he continued freighting until 1879, taking time out in the fall of 1877 to go prospecting. In 1879 he began working for the Circle Ranch of W. C. Conrad in Montana.

In 1886, Harris returned to Canada where he set up a branch of the Circle Ranch on the Little Bow River for W. C. Conrad. He remained there until his re-

tirement in 1911 and died about 1935 at Fort Benton.

Harris' original autobiography was written for the Alberta government archives in 1909 and reproduced in A. O. MacRae's *History of Alberta* (1912) and in a special edition of *The Lethbridge Herald*, July 11, 1935.

However, after re-checking his manuscript, Harris made several vital changes in his life story, particularly in dates of construction of some of the posts. This revised copy was apparently not available in time for Mr. MacRae's book and to date Harris' corrected article has apparently remained unpublished.

In a letter accompanying the article, Harris admitted that he might not be completely accurate on his dates, but stressed the accuracy of his other information. Here is a portion of the letter:

Lethbridge, March 13/09.

Dear Miss Hughes:

Your letter of Feb. 20th to hand. Did not answer it as I expected to have these little stories of mine ready to send you in Feb. but I could not get them ready, hence the delay.

Now I have put them together as far as I can remember them. There may be some mistakes as to dates, but they are correct in other respects. . . . I will send you my picture as soon as I get one taken.¹ Hoping you will understand my explanation of the matter as I am not very good at this kind of work and wishing you all the success there is.

I remain

Yours Truly

(Howell Harris)

In addition to Harris' own story, other articles on his life have been written by two old friends, Norman T. MacLeod² and Senator Dan Riley.³ Portions of their interviews have been inserted into the biography to present the facts in some semblance of chronological order.

In his autobiography, Harris stated:

"My next trip [into Canada] was in fall of 1869. A band of Blackfoot Indians had stolen some stock belonging to James Coburn, so I and two bull-whackers followed them as far as Milk River, just north of the Sweet Grass Hills. During our trip we came across countless herds of buffalo. We did not recover the horses, however, as the Indians were too numerous and war-like, so we returned to Fort Benton.

"My next trip [into Canada] was in the spring of 1871. Went from Fort Benton to Fort Whoopup, at the forks of the St. Marys and Belly Rivers.⁴ This was the first fort built in Alberta south of Edmonton.⁵ I was sent out with a bull-train to collect the furs that had been traded for during the previous winter by Healy⁶ and Hamilton,⁷ who had built the fort. During this trip, the Blood Indians shot a Frenchman⁸ belonging to the fort, right near the fort.

¹ This photograph is now in the Alberta government archives.

² Norman T. MacLeod was a nephew of Col. J. F. MacLeod of the Northwest Mounted Police and came west in 1883. His references are from *The Lethbridge Herald*, March 3-4, 1944: "Memories of Howell Harris."

³ Senator Dan Riley came west in 1883. His articles were carried in *The Calgary Herald*, May 3, 1951, and *The Lethbridge Herald*, June 12, 1952.

⁴ The river east of the confluence of the Oldman and Belly Rivers is now called the Oldman. This would put the site of Fort Whoop-Up at the confluence of the St. Mary and Oldman Rivers, just west of Lethbridge.

⁵ This is not altogether correct. The Northwest Company built Chesterfield House near the present town of Empress, Alberta, in 1791, and operated it until 1821. It was taken over by the Hudson Bay Company and was mentioned in their lists until 1857. Another post named Old Bow Fort or Piegan Post, was built by the Northwest Company between Banff and Calgary in about 1802. It was operated until 1821 when it was taken over by the Hudson Bay Company and closed about two years later.

⁶ John Jerome Healy.

⁷ Alfred B. Hamilton.

⁸ Harris apparently used the expression "Frenchman" when referring to a Canadian, as was often the term at that period.



Near the peak of the fur-trade period, in 1833, the American Fur Company had three primary bases of operation—Fort Union at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone, Fort Cass on the Yellowstone, and Fort McKenzie at the mouth of the Marias. This spirited scene of an 1833 Indian battle at Fort McKenzie, painted by Karl Bodmer, the distinguished Swiss artist who travelled with Maximilian, Prince of Wied, suggests the savage nature of the Blackfeet at this early period. Four decades later, when Fort Benton had long succeeded Fort McKenzie, such whiskey traders as Howell Harris had to be constantly alert to marauding Blackfeet.

"Just after we started on our return trip, nobody being left in the fort except a sick squaw, the Indians set fire to the fort. We forded the St. Marys and camped right where the station of St. Marys is at present. Mr. Hamilton and I returned to try and save the squaw, but we found that the Indians had shot her before setting fire to the fort. Our return trip was without further incident, although we had to be on guard constantly. Hamilton and Healy rebuilt the fort this same summer.

"In September 1872, I was sent out by I. G. Baker and Company to build a trading post near what is now called Slough Bottom at the mouth of the Belly and Old Man Rivers, three miles from Fort Kipp, which had been built just one month before my arrival. We called this post Fort Conrad."

"One day, while Mr. Conrad and I were alone in the store, about eighty Indians crowded in and tried to take possession, but we eventually succeeded in pacifying them, paid them off and got them outside the fort before any damage was done. This same fort was burned down by the Indians the following spring and was never rebuilt."

Norman MacLeod enlarged somewhat on the activities at this post and mentioned two incidents told to him by Harris.

* Harris changed the date from 1871 to 1872 when revising his article, but evidence seems to indicate that his original figure was correct. J. W. Schulz claimed that Fort Kipp was built in the spring of 1871, while Bradley's article "Notes on the Business of I. G. Baker and Company at Fort Benton," *Contributions of the Historical Society of Montana*, IX, (1923), 345-348, stated: "In the winter of 1871-72 they carried on . . . one [Post] on Belly River in the British possessions, some 200 miles from Benton."



Fort Benton was still a trading hub a decade after Howell Harris returned from the Whiskey Fort trade. This pictures an ox-team freighter at Benton in 1884.

"Charles Conrad and Howell were together trading whiskey at, I think, Capt. Jack's bottom, located between the Quarantine grounds and the Slough bottom. Howell once showed me the ruins of the chimney and fireplace there.

"One day a great big South Piegan turned up with a big light sorrel horse and matched it against a chestnut belonging to Jim English who died a year or two ago at Medicine Hat. The Indian horse won the race. The winners promptly flocked into the store and spent their hard-earned money.

"I asked Jim about the race later, and he said they let the Indians win the first race expecting a second match for real stakes, but the Indians must have got wise and 'lit' out with our money."

The second incident was printed by Norman MacLeod in Harris's own words.

"In addition to the post at Capt. Jack's, we had a small one-room shack near the mouth of the Little Bow with a young chap in charge. Apparently he was in some trouble as he managed to send word by a friendly Indian to come down and get him, so I rode down one day.

"On arriving there, I found the shack empty. Bye and bye the young chap crawled out of the near-by brush and told his story.

"A party of Indians had managed to get into the shack and, threatening him with their rifles, made him give up his stock of whiskey. After getting gloriously drunk and abusing him, disappeared;

so he took to the brush. Fortunately he sighted the friendly Indian who used to stay with him, prowling around the shack. Hailing him, the young chap induced him to carry word to Capt. Jack's. He then took to the brush again and stayed there until he saw [me] arrive. He was so scared that he refused to stay there alone, so the two of us started for Capt. Jack's.

"On the way back we were jumped by five Indians. The young chap started to run, but I grabbed his bridle reins and, reaching a buffalo wallow, tied our horses, got out my rifle and started shooting at the Indians who were riding around us in a circle and shooting . . ."

Harris and his young friend evidently killed four of the Indians, as MacLeod mentions meeting the sole Piegan survivor some years later. He remarked that Harris was preparing to leave for Montana at the time of this meeting.

"He was coming up the cellar stairs with an armful of breakfast bacon while I was near the stairs selling the big Piegan a blanket. Seeing Howell, he [the Piegan] looked startled, then addressed him: 'Hiya! Enaksesuki ki Stumokan.'¹⁰ Then turning to me and making the accompanying signs, said: 'The last time I saw him we were five and he was alone. I was the only one who . . . came out.'"

¹⁰ This means Little Beaver Cap, which was Harris' Blackfeet name. Charles Conrad was called "Omuk-sesuki ki Stumokan" or Big Beaver Cap.

Most Montanans regret that Fort Benton was allowed to deteriorate once its historic functions ceased. But even old-timers today remember little more of the dobe walls and block-house than this.



Continuing with his autobiography, Harris stated:

"I traded here [Fort Conrad] till December [1872], then took some teams loaded with Indian goods and built another post three miles above the present site of High River,¹¹ and traded here until May, 1873."

Senator Riley, who took a ranch at the site of the old fort in 1883, gave the following description of Harris' trip north from Fort Benton.

"In this outfit there were three teams of twenty yoke oxen each, and each of these teams hauled three heavy wagons loaded with whiskey, calico, flour, tea, sugar and such goods.

"[Harris] told me of his first experience with Indians north of the border. When he was about one day's ride into this country, his scouts brought the alarm of approaching savages in full war paint. Quickly the youth made a corral of his nine wagons, herding the stock inside. Then he went out to meet the Indian leader, who demanded an exorbitant toll of loot from the wagons. Harris refused and the chief struck him. Harris replied with a blow that knocked the Indian to the ground.

"The white men held their breath in momentary expectation of assault and slaughter. But from over the hill in the background dashed a rider magnificently mounted on a great black horse. He halted everything while he inquired the trouble. When it was explained, he turned upon the war party and ordered them to leave the Harris outfit in peace. It then developed that this stranger ar-

riving so dramatically was none other than Gabriel Dumont, the war leader of the Plains Crees and half-breeds.¹² He was at once their idol and their terror.

"Having come to Canada, Harris decided to look around. His wanderings brought him to the Highwood. Here he saw the fine location of Camp Spitzke and the possibilities of thriving trade with the plains Indians. So he built a whiskey fort."

Harris continued his own autobiography with the mention of a few personalities who stopped at Spitzke Post.

"During this winter [1872-73] the Spit Zee Cavalry¹³ was organized. One day in January, a Frenchman named Leon Harneway and McDougall, a cousin of John McDougall, of Edmonton, came into

¹¹ This was called Spitzke Post after the Spitzke or Highwood River. Senator Riley gave the following description of the fort: "It consisted of a log building with mud roof and was surrounded by a stockade fence eight feet high . . . and had three chambers . . . It was built in an open glade of about five acres, surrounded on all sides by water. The Highwood River wound around the southern part and there was a large creek on the north."

The date of construction is confirmed by Bradley's manuscript, which states: "In 1872-73 . . . two new [Posts] were established, one on the Spitzke River, a tributary of Bow River in the British possessions, about 300 miles from Benton." *Contributions*, IX, 347.

¹² Famous as a plainsman, Dumont played a prominent part in the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 as Louis Riel's lieutenant. He later fled to Montana and joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West tour of the United States and Europe.

¹³ The Spit Zee Cavalry was organized by wolfers and free traders to stop the established trading posts from selling repeating rifles and fixed ammunition to the Blackfeet. These men, who included John Evans as captain, and Harry "Kamoose" Taylor as secretary, claimed their lives were being threatened by the activities of the traders. However, the cavalry had little success.

the post after being robbed and pretty roughly handled by the Indians. Harneway was shot through the wrist and all the bones broken. They stayed with us practically all winter. Harneway is now [1909] living in St. Albert, near Edmonton.

"Right here, I might mention that we were the first ones that wintered cattle in Alberta when we were at this post.¹⁴

"I had quite a narrow escape myself from being shot by an Indian named Starchild.* One day the previous fall, I caught Starchild clubbing another Indian unmercifully. I interfered, with the result that I had to give Starchild a sound thrashing before he would desist. This aroused his enmity and he threatened then that he would have my scalp hanging on a bush before the season was over. I was on my guard, however, and he did not get his chance till one morning along in March [1872].

"I was outside of the fort looking for Indians with furs to trade. I heard a sharp click right behind me and turning around saw Starchild in the act of putting a Hudson Bay fuke¹⁵ under his blanket. I grabbed him by the hair and got hold of his fuke. I then led him into the fort and called Jerry Potts, a Scotch half-breed, who was afterwards one of the best scouts the Mounted Police had. Potts wanted to kill him, but I prevailed on him otherwise, gave the Indian a good scare and let him go, telling him at the same time that if caught around here again we would have no hesitation in killing him."¹⁶

Senator Riley mentioned another attempted ambush on Harris that took place at Spitz Post.

"His relations with the Indians were good, but once he had a narrow escape. The Indians had a simple code of a life for a life, and it didn't matter much whose life.

"So when an Indian down in the Cypress Hills found that his brother had been killed by a white man, a crime which called for the life of a white man,

he elected to be a big hero by killing Howell Harris, the most formidable of all. He planned to crawl on the roof of the whiskey fort and shoot Harris in the back as he stepped out in the morning. However, a friendly Indian¹⁷ passed the word to Harris, who made his exit in the morning from a window at the side, instead of the door. He made a surprise attack on this would-be slayer and shot the Indian instead. Then he soothed irate feelings with a half a gallon of whiskey.

"A duel was once staged at the whiskey fort over an Indian girl, an Englishman and an Indian being the principals. The men stood eighty paces apart with their backs to each other. At the word 'go' they turned and shot. The Indian was killed and the Englishman lost an ear but won the lady."

Continuing with his autobiography, Harris stated:

"In the summer of '73 I freighted between Fort Benton and Helena.

"Ted Hill, an oldtime cattleman, stated that Dave Akers and John 'Liver-eating' Johnson were operating the Spitz Post when the Spitz Cavalry began their raids. "... Akers and Johnson had to make a quick get-away, abandon their fort, as they called it, and leave their work oxen. They put in the rest of the winter at Whoop-Up on the Belly River, another whiskey trading post. In the spring they returned to High River and were surprised to find their cattle fat and sleek."

¹⁴ Gun.

¹⁵ Starchild became a noteworthy in 1879 when he was accused of murdering Sgt. M. Graburn of the Northwest Mounted Police. The Blood was captured two years later and acquitted by a non-police jury. However, in 1883 he was arrested for horse stealing and sent to prison for four years. He became a scout for the police soon after his release and in 1889, Supt. Deane stated: "Of the several Indian scouts I have tried, none have proved to be worth their salt but Starchild. . . . I should be glad to get another native scout of similar character."

¹⁶ Also mentioned as being a young Blackfeet girl.

¹⁷ [There were two Canadian Indians named Starchild, one a Cree Chief and other a Blood. Ahtukukoop, the Cree chief, who signed the treaty of August 23, 1876, with the Canadian government at Fort Carlton, was known as Starchild. The Indian who killed Constable Graburn of the N. M. Police, November, 1879, was a Blood Indian. He died about 1889-90 of tuberculosis, aged 29 years. This would mean he was born about 1860-61 and would have been 11 years old in 1872 when Harris mentioned his fight with the Indian. Turner, *The Northwest Mounted Police*, v. 2, p. 433. Ottawa, 1950. Ed]

"In the fall we built another post, called Fort Standoff, near the Blood Reserve¹⁸. We finished the fort about Dec. 10th, Mr. Conrad taking charge, and I started back to Fort Benton the 17th of December with a bull-train. This was the worst trip that I ever experienced. It turned intensely cold, and a blinding blizzard set in. Every one of my men was badly frozen except Donald Fisher and myself.

"We travelled thirty-six hours at a stretch without stopping, and when we got to the Teton River, in Montana, we camped in a coulee, which in some measure protected us from the blizzard. This was fifty miles above Fort Benton. Fisher and I turned all the cattle loose and we cooked and looked after the balance of the outfit for ten days. We had to break up one of our best wagons for fuel.

"When the storm was over we started for Benton, but the snow was so deep along the trail that we had to follow the river. The river was so winding that it took us seventeen days to complete the trip. One of our men, a Frenchman named White, died in Benton as a result of this trip but the rest all recovered.

"The same night that we made camp on the Teton, John Huntsberger and two other men camped just three miles above us. They ran short of matches and Huntsberger burned up a roll of \$500 bills in a vain effort to start a fire. They set out for Choteau, Montana the next morning and by good luck came across a party of Indians, who took them in charge and guided them to this town. This was the only thing that saved them. Huntsberger was badly frozen.

"During this same storm there were seventy-five United States soldiers badly frozen in going from Benton to Fort Shaw, forty of them dying as the result.*

"I freighted in Montana till 1875. That spring I took a train-load of flour in March for the Mounted Police at Fort MacLeod, who were on the verge of starvation.¹⁹

"In 1877 I took a contract to put up five hundred tons of hay for the Mounted Police at Fort MacLeod. After fulfilling my contract I took charge of the supply trains which accompanied Governor Laird on his commission when they made the treaty with the Blackfoot Indians.²⁰

"I returned to MacLeod and then went prospecting for gold in the mountains at the head of the Belly River in Alberta. Instead of finding gold I found tin. I found the biggest piece of pure tin on record in this continent and it is now [1909] in the United States Assay Office in Helena.

"In the falls of 1878, I took a train-load of goods up with Governor Laird, Colonel MacLeod and about a hundred police to Sounding Lake, when the Big Bear²¹ treaty was made. About half the Indians signed the treaty."

¹⁸ This post was located a short distance east of the present settlement of Standoff near the confluence of Belly and Waterton Rivers.

There has been more controversy about the date of construction of the post; and more people have claimed to have built it than any other in southern Alberta.

¹⁹ The Northwest Mounted Police of course made no admission of near-starvation in their annual report for that year.

²⁰ Treaty No. Seven or "The Blackfeet Treaty" was made at Blackfoot Crossing of the Bow River on September 22, 1877.

²¹ Seven years later, Big Bear's band massacred nine people and destroyed the settlement of Frog Lake, Alberta, in the Northwest Rebellion of 1885. They were pursued by troops under T. Bland Strange and captured after two fierce engagements. Big Bear was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and died soon after his release.

*[Apparently this is erroneous. A news item in the *Helena Herald* mentions an account from Major Walker, U. S. Army paymaster, being in Benton with Army pay for Fort Shaw and Benton; very cold, river frozen over so that teams could be driven across the ice, but no soldiers reported frozen. The winter may have been 1873-1874, not 1872-1873. There is no mention in the *Herald* of 1872-1873 of any severe winter weather. Ed.]

R. D. MacDougall, Box 1177, Arabian American Oil Co., Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, receives the distinction of being our most distant reader, although the magazine is now mailed to several foreign countries.

This incident was enlarged upon by the late John Peter Turner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police archivist.

"Near Sounding Lake they [the Police] met Lieutenant - Governor Laird and his escort. Shortly after reaching the Cree encampment, Irvine and his officers sensed an undercurrent of discontent. It became evident that it was the result of intrigue on the part of Big Bear, who had refused to sign the Carlton-Pitt Treaty of 1876. Several half-breed traders from Battleford and the vicinity of Carlton were on hand, and a bull-train of goods for distribution to the Indians had been brought in by Howell Harris [of Whoop-Up fame] from Fort Benton on the Missouri. Most of the assembled Crees were in favour of the treaty; they signed readily and accepted their money payments."²²

Harris continued with his biography:

"I stayed at Fort Walsh all that winter [1878-79] and returned to Benton the following spring. This was my last year with the bull-trains. I went into the cattle business with my brother and the Conrad boys in Montana, and did not come back to Alberta till 1886 and have been here ever since."

According to Norman MacLeod, Harris did not remain in the cattle business during those seven years, as he recalled meeting him in Fort Benton in 1883.

"At that time he [Harris] and Frank Strong had a livery stable there. He was also in partnership with Billy Rowe, a brother of George Rowe, well-known in the MacLeod and Lethbridge districts."

For the remainder of his life, Harris settled down to a quiet ranching career. In the remaining paragraphs of his autobiography he carried little hope for a brighter life for himself or for the survival of the Indians.

"Since the Indians have been put on the reserves, they have been gradually dying out and I think it is only a question of time when they [will] become extinct, like the buffalo they used to hunt on the boundless prairies."²³

"As far as I am concerned, there remains nothing of interest to be told, as my life has been one of peace, if not one of monotony, during the last twenty years."

Just as a footnote, the character of Howell Harris was summarized by Senator Riley when commenting on his part in the "whiskey trading" era.

"Howell Harris would probably have been outstanding in any period of history. But he fitted perfectly into primitive settings. He was resourceful, fearless, implacable—all qualities necessary for the chance he took in those days."

²² J. P. Turner, *The Northwest Mounted Police*, [Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1950.]

²³ Harris's prediction in 1909 is far from becoming fulfilled. A typical example is the population of the Blood Indians. In 1883—the year they were allotted their present reserve—they numbered 1,550. Today their population is 2,043.

Rufus A. Coleman is a long-time Professor of English at Montana State University. He has written extensively for a number of literary and historical journals, but this is his first venture in the *Montana Magazine of History*. We hope that he may be persuaded to do more pieces hereafter with the charm of "Mark Twain." Many Montanans are familiar with Mr. Coleman's *Northwest Books*, a report of the Committee on Books of the Inland Empire Council of Teachers of English, 1942. He also edited *The Golden West In Story And Verse*, published by Harper & Brothers, N. Y., in 1932.

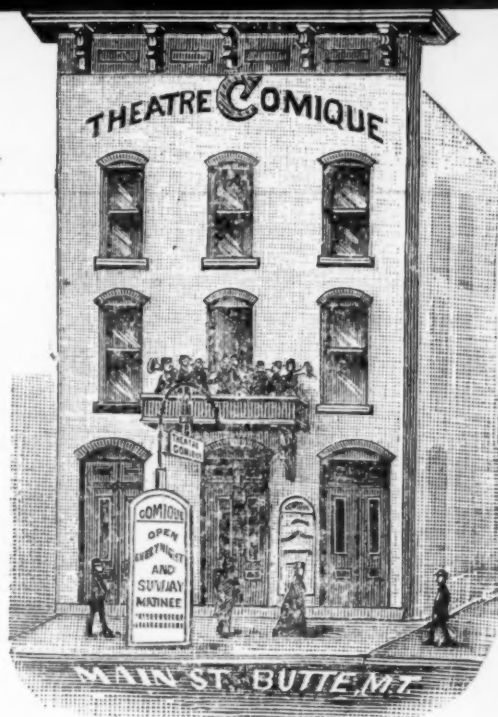
The Theatre Comique, once part of the present site of the Metals Bank building at Butte, was no longer in blossom when Mark Twain visited the Copper Camp. An 1880 music hall, with a real frontier hurdy-gurdy flourish, featuring drinks, dance-hall girls, vaudeville and burlesque, its doors were reputedly never closed in its era of exciting operation. Twain's prestige—and fee—required that he play at the Grand; although a decade earlier he would have found the Comique atmosphere more in keeping with his youthful adventures in Nevada. The Comique, later one of Butte's first movie houses, had ceased operation when Mark Twain came to town.

MARK TWAIN

IN MONTANA, 1895

BY RUFUS A. COLEMAN

Mark Twain hated the platform stage. It necessitated extensive inland travel. And one can readily understand this dislike when one recalls or reads about the trains of the seventies and eighties, which, while much faster than the stage coaches of thirty years before that he had endured as a young man in Nevada and California, were little less uncomfortable. There were the drafty, smoky cars, the long drawn-out, irregular schedules, the resultant delays in dirty stations, buildings often at some distance from town, so that a traveler must take a long drive to his hotel in a cold, rickety bus or wagon. All these hazards might easily have dismayed a man of thirty, and at this period when Twain was starting on a trip around the world, he was sixty, a sick old man afflicted with a painful carbuncle on one of his legs. Nothing but necessity or what he thought was that could have forced him to this extremity. And Twain was in real trouble, for two years earlier in 1893, the Webster Publishing Company, of which he was sole owner, had failed, leaving him about \$160,000 in debt, \$60,000 of which was from his wife's personal estate. His friends had urged him to go into bankruptcy, and he could have easily done so without public criticism, but, like Sir Walter Scott before him, he was determined to pay every cent of his obligation. Henry Rogers, Vice-President of the Standard Oil Company, won over by the geniality and good sportsmanship of the humorist, had consented to try and bring some order out of chaos, but even his expert hand could not magically wave aside



such a heavy deficit. So Twain planned a trip around the world from west to east, reversing the usual procedure of world travelers, a venture from which two years later came his book of reminiscences, *Following the Equator*.¹

But there was for Twain a lighter side to lecturing. On the platform and well launched, he soon warmed up, capturing readily the close attention of his audience. His tangled shock of once sandy hair (some called it carroty), now thickly specked with gray, his heavy Daniel Webster eyebrows, his ambling walk, his slow drawl, his sense of pause for the right word or apt phrase, and his dead-pan look at the climactic moment—these were irresistible.

So adept a speaker was he that his novelist friend, W. D. Howells, once remarked half querulously, that Twain could amble down to the footlights and gather up his audience in the palm of his hand, an opinion which delighted Twain, for he was ever open to flattery and at times as pleased with himself

¹ First published by The American Publishing Co., Hartford, Conn., 1897.

and as boastful of his talents, as a small boy showing off his sore thumb. No wonder Mrs. Clemens called her husband, "Youth."

Another pleasant feature of this particular trip was his traveling companions. With him were his wife and his daughter, Clara, and, of course, the ubiquitous Major Pond who had charge of the American part of the journey. Pond deserves a volume for himself. Indeed, he indulged himself in this very luxury years later in his own memoirs which he called *Eccentricities of Genius*,² and in which he gives several pages to Twain. Pond was a famous manager, perhaps the best known of his day. Few had had more experience in handling lecture and concert tours for all kinds of talent. He knew how to please the crotchety Twain, insisting when the point was essential, and yielding gracefully and genially when it did not matter.

The travelers had already appeared in Cleveland, Mackinaw Island (Grand Hotel), Petoskey, Duluth, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Winnipeg (two nights), and Crookston, Minnesota.³ At Crookston, Twain had been the first to sprawl his name on the register of a brand new hotel, a hostelry boasting of "cold water, electric lights and all modern improvements."⁴ But this splendor was somewhat dimmed when the travelers had to arise at 4:30 the next morning. Clara was made somewhat comfortable when, having to wait forty-five minutes for the train, she was able to get her winter cloak (telegraphed for from Elmira) from a sleepy express agent. But Twain, though grumpy, tried to bring himself out of his mood by half-seriously insisting that his agreement with Pond did not specify waiting about railway stations at five o'clock in the morning "for the late trains that never arrived."⁵ Was it not down in black and white that he should travel? A baggage truck would do. So he got on one and Pond rattled him up and down the platform,

while Clara laughingly took a snap shot to prove that the manager was keeping the letter of his contract.

Early morning inconvenience was soon forgotten, however, when, once on board, they were speeding over long stretches of North Dakota prairie, scaring prairie dogs and jack rabbits, enjoying sights and sounds which brought to the humorist's mind his Nevada stage-coach trip of the sixties. They arrived in Great Falls at 7:30 A. M., July 31, after a good night's rest on the sleeper, and with a whole day before them. Twain even took a leisurely three-mile buggy drive to the famous smelter and almost equally famous Giant's Spring, stopping enroute to rest or to allow Clara or the Major to take pictures. One such stop was before the cabin of a Norwegian family where five cats immediately won Twain's attention. Two of them he gathered up in his arms, offering in a joking mood to buy them from the little girl owner, and when she cried, comforting her with a story. Cats intrigued Twain. In his own household there had generally been several of these pets, some of them bearing arresting names like Bambino, Satan, Sin, Genesis, Deuteronomy, and Sour Mash. Nothing delighted him and his children more than when he told them monstrous stories of cat heroes. He admired the cat especially for its sense of independence, and considered it superior to the dog, a preference which may have been enhanced by a mild sense of gratitude, for a cat had more than once helped Twain out of a predicament. One such experience occurred after he had returned from his *Innocents Abroad* trip brash and flushed with bright promises. For a few days

² There are two editions, one American and one English; Major J. B. Pond, *Eccentricities of a Genius* (New York: G. W. Dillingham Co., 1900) and *Ibid* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1901) respectively. Page references in this article are based on the latter volume.

³ *Ibid.*, 199 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁵ *Idem*



Dapper John Maguire, who came to Butte in 1875 by way of County Cork, Australia and San Francisco, was a top Montana theatrical impresario for many years. His Grand Opera House in Butte really was that—a fine theater. This picture is of the rebuilt Grand, after the fire of 1888, seven years before Samuel Clemens' appearance there. The short man with the cane, "Uncle Dick" Sutton, was the frontier counterpart of Maguire, from whom he leased the Grand. Sutton, a flamboyant theatrical character, also operated the Grand Theater at Great Falls, where Mark Twain appeared.

he visited at the home of a "very proper" Hartford citizen. The brother-in-law of Henry Ward Beecher, no less. No drinking, roistering nor even smoking here! Late at night in his own bedroom he would often sneak a few smokes. The next morning, whenever anyone of the household would sniff a strange odor, Twain would scowl at the cat, as if to say, "here is the guilty party." He "saved his own reputation," so he wrote later to a friend, but the poor cat quickly "lost caste."⁶

Reporters were naturally gratified when he told them that "Great Falls is one of the prettiest towns in the West, resembling Denver of a few years ago, except that the buildings in Great Falls are finer than were those in Denver."

According to his manager, Twain was not at his best that night, perhaps owing to his overexertion of the afternoon. However, the newspapers did not reflect disappointment, one of them recording that "the best audience that ever attended an entertainment of a similar nature in Great Falls listened to Mark Twain's 90-minute talk at the opera house last night and thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment."⁷ Following the program the humorist attended a reception, as was his custom, this time at the Electric City Club.

⁶ This anecdote first appeared in an article by Clemens in *Alta California*, March 3, 1868; it was reprinted in *The Twainiana*, September-October, 1948, and was quoted by Wecter, *Mark Twain and Mrs. Fairbanks* (Huntington Library, 1949), 15 n. 3.

⁷ *Great Falls Tribune*, August 1, 1895.

In consequence, despite the wonderful Missouri Canyon and the splendor of the Rockies, on the journey to Butte the next morning, the whole party was cast down, doubtless responding to the temper of their chief member. Pond laid the blame on the "light" air, obviously a mere rationalization to account for trouble lying much deeper. Twain's Puritan conscience was always reproaching him for any departure from the perpendicular in social conduct or professional attainment. Being his own most exacting critic, he knew instinctively when he fell below his own standard of excellence. But at Butte that same night he retrieved himself, doing so well that his manager sat in the audience chuckling with the rest of them, even though he had heard the same anecdote many times. What pleased him most was the number of chucklers, for they meant money in the till. A shrewd businessman, Pond was sensitive as a barometer to any rise or fall in ticket sales. His spirit here was as "light" as the air, and that was mighty light in Butte's almost mile-high altitude. Pond himself recorded the height as being "nearly 8,000 feet," an exaggeration perhaps reflecting the enthusiasm of the whole region where fortunes were made in a few days and where everything was both light and high, the lowest coin in use being "two-bits." To this latter extravagance Pond had a closing word. "Absurd,"⁸ he said. Reviewing the lecture, one reporter⁹ did himself proud in fervid rhetoric. He warned his readers that they should not in this lecture expect flaming peroration or ponderous logic, nor (misled by the advertising bill) a lecture at all in the ordinary meaning of the word, but those who went to hear "the droll genius whose quaint humor and native wit have sent refreshing waves of rippling laughter around the world," would not be disappointed. *The Miner*, he asserted, is pleased to know that Butte, thought by many to be a poor lecture town, "gave

the distinguished visitor so complimentary a reception."

The next appearance at Anaconda was entirely off schedule, being made because the manager of the Evans Opera House there had known the speaker years before in Virginia City, Nevada. And at that the lecture barely missed being given at all, for when Twain and Pond, having left the ladies at the Butte hotel, boarded a streetcar for the depot, the power went off before they had gone three blocks, leaving them stranded with only ten minutes in which to catch their train. The two began to shout for help from passing delivery wagons. One driver demanded ten dollars. That was sheer hold up. Desperate, Pond offered another driver any price the fellow asked. They scrambled on board. And then began a descent of Arizona Street that would have left behind the wildest Irishman that ever raced back from the cemetery after a funeral. Shaken but happy, the two arrived at the depot in time to catch the last coach. Pond, usually cautious, thrust two dollars in the hand of the astonished driver who had asked them for but one.¹⁰

The Anaconda lecture was the one financial flop of the whole trip. And one could hardly expect otherwise. And why? First, the lecture, prepared hastily, was not properly publicized; second, at this time Anaconda was a mere settlement, comprised of foreign laborers working in the smelter, often footloose bachelors, people to whom American idiom was alien, let alone American tradition; third, throughout the week of appearances in Montana, Twain was, in some of the centers, competing with an itinerant stock company playing "Fritz in a Mad House." And while to some Twain was certainly crazy, he wasn't as crazy as that. Twain later asked Pond to send

⁸ Pond, *Eccentricities of Genius*, 210.

⁹ *The Butte Miner*, August 2, 1895.

¹⁰ Pond, *Eccentricities of a Genius*, 211. For a humorous fictional account of this Irish habit of racing back to town after a funeral, see Clyde F. Murphy, *The Glittering Hill* (New York: Dutton, 1944), 168-184.

back one hundred dollars to the distressed manager, when he heard how low the receipts had been. But though the opera house that night held few in number, the mayor himself gave "a witty address of welcome," and the people went away happy. The newspaper reporter¹¹ in his notice the next morning laid especial emphasis on the speaker's immaculate dress so unlike the slovenly garb given him in his pictures. Like other newsmen, he was much impressed with Twain's "shaggy bunch of iron-gray hair," which with his deep-set eyes, solemn demeanor, and twang and drawl of speech, was in exact keeping with the humor he presented. "Anaconda people," he reminded his readers, "will long remember the night they saw and heard Mark Twain."

The travelers arrived in Helena, the capital, on the morning of Saturday, August 3, in readiness for the lecture in the Ming Opera House that night. According to Pond, though the Helena citizens in general did not care for lectures, "They all liked Mark." The alert reporter¹² for the evening paper, finding the famous visitor in a receptive mood at the Placer hotel, made what in journalistic parlance is called a "scoop," detailing a full account of the interview in that night's issue. Compared to other impressions, his description presents a different sided Twain, for here the humorist was in street garb. As Twain stood there "facing the parlor, hat in hand, running his fingers through his curly locks, now almost gray," the newsman could easily take him for a business man or a statesman (perhaps having in mind some of Montana's tycoons of the day) a man "whose dark blue eyes are as clear as crystal," a man who could "talk easily and quietly, yet with great deliberation," as one would, say, when making a big deal in stock, or when in conference with his fellow Senators.

After the program, Twain was guest of honor at an exciting reception at the Montana Club, where many state nota-

bles were present, chief among them Senator Sanders and Judge Knowles of

SOUVENIR

GRAND OPENING

MING'S

OPERA HOUSE

HELENA, M.T., SEPT. 2, 1880,

—BY THE—

HASENWINKLE DRAMATIC CO'Y

—SUPPORTING—

MISS KATIE PUTNAM

C. A. HASENWINKLE.....MANAGER
GEO. LAWRENCE.....BUSINESS AGENT

In Sketches from Chas. Dickens' Famous Work,
entitled, THE

Old Curiosity Shop

WITH THE FOLLOWING SUPERB CAST:

<p>LITTLE NELL, THE MARCHIONESS, DICK SWIVELLER, QUILP, SAMPSON BRASS, GRANDFATHER TRENT, NED TRENT, MASTER HUMPHREY, STRANGER, BURTON, HIGGINS, SALLY BRASS, MRS. QUILP, MRS. WOBBLES,</p>	<p>Her famous Dual Role.</p> <p>MISS KATIE PUTNAM H. A. FERRIS FLINT KENNICOTT C. A. HASENWINKLE CHAS. COON WILL O'KEEFE ED HOWARD A. HASEN BARRY ADAMS OSCAR WILLIAMS J. ROLLINS MISS ADA LAWRENCE MISS AGNES KENNICOTT</p>
---	--

A Full and Efficient Orchestra under the
Direction of

M. O'REARDON!

PAUL C. BLUM,
Amusement Manager.

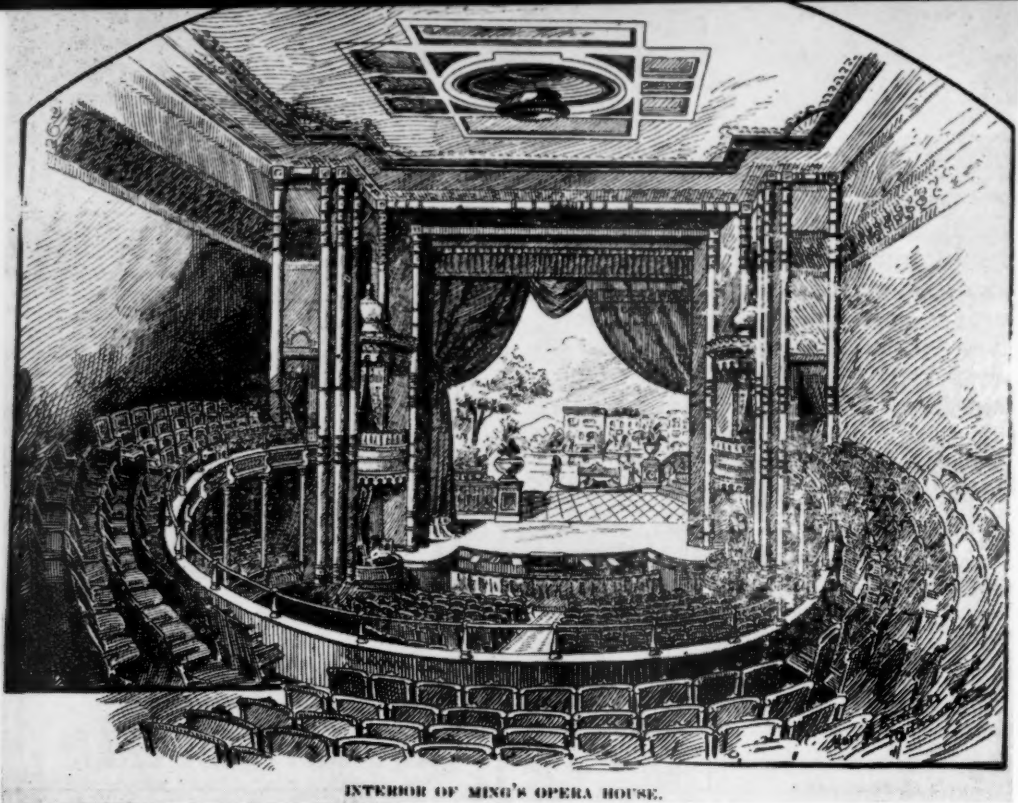
PERFORMED BY
RALEIGH & CLARK

HERALD PRINT, HELENA.

Program of Ming's Opera House in Helena, printed on silk for the festive grand opening of September 2, 1880. Ming's was still going strong when Mark Twain appeared there fifteen years later.

¹¹ The Anaconda Standard, August 2, 1895.

¹² The Helena Daily Herald, August 3, 1895.



INTERIOR OF MING'S OPERA HOUSE.

Built in 1880, in the European tradition of circular seating and elaborate boxes, Ming's Opera House at 13 N. Jackson, was a plush frontier emporium of considerable distinction. Before and after his August 3, 1895 appearance here, Mark Twain was winned and dined lavishly by the merchant and mining princes and many of the leading political figures of the State's capital city. His reception at the historic Montana Club, attended by many state notables, is described as "exciting."

the State Supreme Court.¹³ Both of these men were leading citizens of the state. Both were far advanced in masonry, well above the elementary stage where one asks the foolish question, "where does the Worshipful Master hang his hat?" Both were prominent republicans, as exemplary as Senator Taft himself. For these appearances in Great Falls, Butte, and Helena especially, many former friends and associates had come from far and near to greet an old comrade now grown famous. When they had first met him in 1862, or thereabouts, Sam Clemens (his name in Virginia City days) was a somewhat awkward, volcanic, young miner and reporter in his late twenties. In the Great Falls audience was Kyle Price who had been an apprentice in the composing room of the *Virginia City Enterprise*, when Twain was writing provocative and sometimes vituperative columns for that well-known paper. One diatribe brought such an insulting

response that the enraged Clemens sent its writer a challenge. But duelling at the time was against the law, the infringement of which might incur a heavy jail sentence. Being the aggressor, Clemens vamoosed for San Francisco, where for some time he continued to get into reportorial trouble. At the Helena reception one episode, threatening to end tragically, so stamped itself on Pond's memory that he recorded exact words: During a toast to the guest of the evening, one of the diners broke out in angry remonstrance:

"Hold on a minute; before we can go further I want to say to you, Sam Clemens, that you did me a d...d dirty trick over there in Silver City,

¹³ For biographical data of Sanders and Knowles, see *Who's Who in America*, 1903-5, 1910-11, respectively. For longer notices see Bowen, *Progressive Men of Montana* (Chicago: A. W. Bowen & Co., n.d.), 32-6, 57-8 and Joaquin Miller, *Illustrated History of the State of Montana* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1894), 808-9, 60. Also for Sanders see *Dictionary of American Biography*, XVI, 336-7.

and I've come here to have a settlement with you."

There was a deathly silence for a moment, when Mark said in his deliberate drawl: "Let's see. That was before I reformed, wasn't it?"

Senator Sanders suggested that inasmuch as the other fellow had never reformed, Clemens and all the others present forgive him and drink together, which all did.¹⁴

Twain's visit at the Capital was naturally the occasion of much reminiscing before and after the lecture, most of which, though rich in frontier humor, has not been published. Young Sam in his Nevada days was thought by many to be shiftless, a quiet-eyed fellow who frequented saloons and gambling halls, but did not drink (much), who was often a case-keeper, but did not gamble (much). He kept his eyes and his ears open all right, but was usually down on his luck. One of the best of these anecdotes concerned Sam and a prospector called Ballou, with whom he once stayed when he was down to hard pan. Sam did the cooking, whatever cooking was called for, since the fare was mostly beans and bacon. Though game was scarce, one day Ballou came in with a grouse and asked his young helper to cook it, while he went out to try his luck again. One bird was too skimpy. Soon the room was filled with the entrancing aroma of boiled chicken. This was too much for Sam. He deliberately ate the grouse, leaving the bones in the pot, and then went off to sleep. After hours of tramping the hills, Ballou returned empty-handed and, grumpily waking the dozing cook, ordered him to serve the bird. Still half-asleep, Sam kept rubbing his eyes.

"Well, why don't you get out the chicken?" asked Ballou.

Clemens slowly got up and walked over to the stove, lifted the lid from the kettle and then in a drawl, now famous, said:

"I'll be darned if it ain't all boiled away; there's nothing left but the bones."¹⁵

Senator Sanders walked with Twain to the Northern Pacific depot the next

morning and even stayed with the party in the Pullman for their five-hour trip to Missoula, some hundred and twenty-five miles to the south. On arriving at Missoula, Pond and Twain mounted the box with the driver of the hotel bus, while Mrs. Twain and Clara rode inside. In 1895, according to official census, Missoula was a town of nearly 2,500 people, with one main street and one large hotel, The Florence. Twain went to his room for his daily rest almost as soon as he had entered the lobby, while his wife and daughter, at the request of Colonel Burt, commandant of the troops at Fort Missoula, drove out for dinner at the Post in an army ambulance, their first experience of this kind. There were big doings at the Fort. Adjutant General Ruggles was there on his annual inspection tour.

The lecture that evening at the Bennett Theatre, a small auditorium on the second floor of a two-story brick building, was well attended, many officers with their wives being among the listeners. Like his predecessors, the *Missoulian* reporter¹⁶ spread himself in the next morning's write-up. After indicating that a "fashionable" audience was present, he called attention to the lecturer's easy stage presence and well-modulated voice so that, he wrote, "time passes so swiftly that it is with regret the hearer leaves the speaker's presence and moves out of the picturesque world which has woven the importance of the occasion, he must have spent hours on this coverage which, to do him justice, contained much exact quotations by which his readers could pretty well follow the context at least of stories loosely strung together."¹⁷

¹⁴ Pond *Eccentricities of a Genius*, 212.

¹⁵ *The Anaconda Standard*, August 4, 1895.

¹⁶ *The Daily Missoulian*, August 6, 1895.

¹⁷ While Clemens occasionally changed his reading titles, his selections during this trip in the Pacific Northwest was on the whole the same. The following notice indicates a typical program: "His programme will be as follows: My First Theft, A Fancy Dress Incident, Bit Off More Than He Could Chew, Tom Sawyer Crusade, and one other to be announced on the spot." (*The Butte Miner*, August 1, 1895, p. 6.)



These colored troops of the 25th Infantry were probably present when Mark Twain visited Fort Missoula. They moved out when the Fort was abandoned during the Spanish-American War, after 22 years of existence. Later the Post was re-established.

The post-lecture reception was held at the home of a prominent Missoulian. When Twain asked his host why one of his anecdotes went over so much better than the others (he was always choosing names at random, seldom using the same one two nights in succession), he was told that the name of its hero was the same as that of a well-known pioneer family in the locality.

Two army ambulances came for the visitors the next morning for another trip to the Fort. The ladies rode with General Ruggles in the first one, while Pond remained behind to settle hotel bills and make arrangements for their departure on the afternoon train. He would follow later in the second ambulance. Twain, wishing exercise, said he would walk on ahead. Accounts settled, about an hour later Pond with his driver moved off at a lively pace. Open prairie lay between the Fort and the town, and at this season the grass and the wild flowers were withered, for the forest fires had been raging in all the surrounding country. While still some distance away from their destination, they saw in the distance a figure which signaled to them. It was Twain, lost, tired, and happy to get a ride.

When the three reached the Fort, a colored sergeant stepped up to the dismounting Twain, saying quietly:

"Are you Mark Twain?"

"I am."

"I have orders to arrest you and take you to the guardhouse."¹⁸ When the sergeant marched him off, Twain went

submissively, not saying a word. It was an old gag, he knew that immediately, for he had been subjected to similar pranks many times. One who hands out jokes must learn to take them. Twain had found this out through the years. As a cub reporter in Virginia City, however, he had not been so docile.

One likes to think that the officers may have regaled their visitor with some of the many anecdotes centered in this region. For instance, the one about the prohibition against shooting at buffalo from front porches. This was manifestly a "tall" one though a similar ruling might easily have been made for deer, since many of them must have passed close by on their way to the Bitterroot River. The chief danger seems to have been that official quarters were in the range of fire. At the present time, pheasants can on occasion be seen from more modern front porches in this same location. The first log structure was begun in 1877, largely at the insistence of thoroughly frightened Missoula citizens. Its erection had been unusually difficult, since most of the soldiers had marched south to oppose the elusive Joseph who during the next few months was to play hide-and-seek with the military in a large part of Montana territory. The Nez Perce chief, already well advanced down Lolo canyon, was threatening the entire Bitterroot Valley. In 1895, Fort officers must have known this history, since careful records were kept. Some forty years after Twain's visit, one of them, Captain Albert E. Roethermich, was to edit these

¹⁸ Pond, *Eccentricities of a Genius*, 215.

data in the form of an interesting historical chronicle.¹⁹

The visitors enjoyed the inspection of seven companies of the Twenty-Fifth United States Colored Regiment, though Pond mistakenly recorded it as the Twenty-Seventh. The smart maneuvers, the stirring marches played by a thirty-piece band, the surrounding buildings, the parade grounds backed by not too distant hills—all this color and movement must have pleased Mrs. Twain and her daughter, both Easterners, and even Twain himself, who had been away from the West for many years.

That Tuesday afternoon, August 6, 1895, the group left for Spokane, thus ending Twain's one and only visit to Montana. Seventeen days later, on the steamer Warrimoo, he was to leave Victoria, British Columbia, enroute to Sidney, Australia, on the first lap of his trip around the world. In some ways, he had already left behind the pleasantest part of his western journey, for in Washington and British Columbia he was to be bothered considerably by smoke from forest fires and he caught no glimpse of Mount Rainier or Mount Baker. He was, however, not too cast down to make a characteristic quip. On one occasion, when asked how he enjoyed mountain scenery, he replied, "It's out of sight!"²⁰ But his voice was growing husky and he spent longer morning periods in bed. He was growing more irritable. He was smoking incessantly, according to Pond. Physicians said it would eventually kill him. Well, it did—fifteen years later.²¹

¹⁹ Captain A. E. Rothermich, "Early Days at Fort Missoula," *Frontier and Midland*, XLVI (Spring, 1936), 225-35.

²⁰ For the anecdote I am indebted to Ruth A. Burnett, whose master's Thesis, *Mark Twain in the Northwest* (University of Washington, 1951), covers Clemens' lectures in Oregon (Portland), Washington, and British Columbia (Vancouver and Victoria). An abridgment of the above was published in *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, XLII (July, 1951), 1878-202.

²¹ Clemens' Montana itinerary was as follows: Great Falls, July 31; Butte, August 1; Anaconda, August 2; Helena, August 3; Missoula, August 5.

DAVID THOMPSON'S Journals

Ordinarily when a good book is published in a very limited edition, it at once attracts attention and is swiftly sold out. Strangely enough, M. Catherine White's *David Thompson's Journals Relating To Montana And Adjacent Regions, 1802-1812* (Price \$7.50), has not sold well. This in spite of the fact that it is a very fine and valuable book and in spite of the fact that the first edition was limited to 500 copies. In this day and age a limited edition of this sort (500 copies) is almost unheard of. It is a collector's item as soon as it is off the press.

We can't escape the conviction that the University press has made two errors. First, it should have printed an economical 1500 to 3000 volumes instead of an uneconomical 500. Second, the book should have been promoted. This is especially true in view of the fact that Miss White's book is the inaugural volume of the Montana State University Studies.

We'd like to point out to collectors of Montaniana that here is a rare opportunity. Libraries and a few individuals who were informed of the book's publication rather indirectly, have purchased some 300 volumes. This leaves 200 to go. The Historical Society has no financial interest in this book, nor is it our intent to usurp the functions of the University publicity department. But we will accept orders on this book for forwarding to the University.

We do this because we know that we can endorse this book in all respects and because we'd like to apprise our readers of an opportunity to pick up a rare book for only \$7.50. But we caution; if you want the book, order quickly. All notices of this kind which have previously appeared in this magazine have resulted in very quick sales—especially to Eastern book dealers. In two months times we may be unable to supply you with a copy.



Judith Basin TOP HAND

Reminiscences of William Burnett, An Early Montana Cattleman

Edited by Michael Kennedy

The big man sat straight and firm in the saddle. The smaller one, quicker and more nervous, fidgeted occasionally in the seat of the spring wagon. The first slant-rays of sun ricocheted from the deep banks of snow still held in the folds of the Bull Mountains and lighted the cottonwood ribbon of the Musselshell river ahead. It had been an easy drive from Wyoming. They had speculated enviously on the steaming coffee at the Chinaman's place in Roundup and thick golden pancakes, but it was out of the way. So they made their own camp. Now there would be another night camp, or a stop at the isolated cow camp or sod-roofed ranch house—if they found one—before they skirted the Snowies and moved down into the greening range of the Judith Basin.

The Burnett brothers—big Bill and wiry Perk—had heard that "The Basin" was opening up. For a dozen years the trail herds had been fanning out from Miles Town, moving north and west as the buffalo grass was cropped closer and closer by thousands of voracious longhorns along the Powder and the Yellowstone.

And for the last four years, since '78, the big boys from the mining and merchandise territory to the west had moved to take over the rich range which the buffalo and Indian were just vacating. T. C. Power from Benton and J. H. McKnight of Fort Shaw had joined with the Judith Basin pioneer, H. P. Brooks, to form the Judith Cattle Co. Capitalists Andy Davis and S. T. Hauser had formed the DHS with Granville Stuart as manager. Kohrs and Bielenberg had driven in several thousand head from the Deer Lodge Valley, and a number of individual

cowmen, such as James Fergus, were expanding their herds. A new cattle empire was developing, and Bill and G. P. Burnett, top hands in a day of real cowboys, loaded with all their earthly possessions, were to be part of the fabulous kingdom.

Bill Burnett, whose cryptic statement follows, was a giant among giants. Physically he was big, tall and straight, lean of face and ruddy of complexion. He was quiet and soft-spoken, but God help the man who crossed him unfairly. Like others of the strong breed of men coming up the long tough trail from Texas, and the range-born crop of native youth who were then virtually growing up in the saddle, Burnett was a natural. He knew cattle perhaps better than he knew people. He could outguess, dominate, placate and handle any critter under any condition.

Few men realize that they are living history, and Bill Burnett was no exception. Undramatically written in the vernacular as he talked, devoid of glamour, full of understatement and skirting away from controversy, his statement is more interesting for its omissions and low-key effect than for what it actually says. It was written at Gilt Edge, January 11, 1941, some five and a half years before his death. No editing has been done on the statement. Only the appended footnotes have been added.

Montana sorely needs a definitive history of the cattle industry. But until it can be written, such brief, piecemeal excerpts as this must be laboriously accumulated by the Historical Society of Montana. Further original source material of ranches, roundups, men, motives and events of the open-range era is eagerly sought by the Society.

Statement by W. C. Burnett of Gilt Edge



I have been asked to write something about the cattle business in Montana in the early days and some of my experiences on the range.

I came to Montana from Buffalo, Wyoming in May, 1882 with my brother G. P. Burnett. We was running a feed stable in Buffalo,¹ business wasn't very good so we concluded we would go to Montana. Nothing very exciting happened on the trip. We crossed the Crow Reservation, crossed the Yellowstone at a town they called Coulson, that was the terminus of the NP Railroad at that time, we came out on alkali flat where Billings is now. Someone had built a frame building for a store, I remember it had been raining and he had some boards in front to keep the alkali mud out of the store. We crossed the Musselshell near where Lavina is now. We camped one night west of the Snowy Mountains. For our mode of traveling we had a spring wagon, eight or ten head of horses; our horses strayed off that night. Next morning G. P. went to hunt them, I got breakfast and went to hunt him. We got back to camp to find the fire out in the grass and it had burned some of the spokes out of our wagon so we packed our stuff on a couple of horses. We crossed Spring Creek where Lewistown is now.² A breed named Janeaux had a log cabin down on the creek bank dispensing rot-gut whiskey to the half-breeds or anyone that could take it. We went from there to Jimmy Fergus's on Armells Creek (later Fergus County was named after him, it was then Meagher County).³ After eating dinner I asked Mr. Fergus if he needed

any men and he looked our outfit over and asked where we were from and I told him Texas. He says, "You look like a couple of horse thieves to me!"

We went over to the Pioneer Cattle Company Ranch located on Ford's Creek west of the Judith Mountains. Granville Stuart was manager.⁴ They were just starting on the spring round-up so we went to work for the company. They had several thousand head of cattle. We branded around three thousand calves that year. We had a crew of twelve men, a mess wagon, bed wagon, and a horse wrangler. We was allowed eight horses to the man. There was lots of range, the country was open from the Musselshell north to the Missouri River, east to the

¹ Near the headwaters of one fork of the Powder River famous in cow country ballad and slogan as being "a mile wide and an inch deep." The Powder flows north from Wyoming, emptying into the Yellowstone east of Miles City. For three decades after the '80's, this cow country enjoyed an international reputation for wild critters, spooky brones and rough riders.

² "The largest and by far the best Metis community was that on Spring Creek. The hunters who founded it had chosen one of Montana's most beautiful locations, midway in the green, well-watered Judith Basin . . . Twenty-five families came in Red River carts in 1879 and thereafter the colony grew steadily; before any appreciable white migration occurred it had 150 Metis families." Joseph Kinsey Howard, *Strange Empire*, (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1952), 344.

³ Eli Guardipee, a young breed, worked for Joe Kipp as a trader at a camp on the Judith River near present Utica. The Blackfeet were in the Basin that winter in large numbers, hunting buffalo. "In the spring of 1880, after the Blackfeet had moved back . . . I was at James Fergus's ranch north of the Judith Mountains . . . Fergus had just moved in with his cattle and was building his ranch houses . . . There was scarcely any white settlement in all that beautiful country at that time." Manuscript on Guardipee by John B. Ritch, Montana Historical Library, Helena.

⁴ Stuart preferred locating the D-H-S spread on the Little Big Horn. But the Indian situation and government red tape frustrated all negotiations. Finally, between June and October, 1880, he built what was virtually an auxiliary of Fort Maginnis as home ranch, cut a good hay crop, and moved 5,000 head of cattle from Western Montana to the new range. Granville Stuart, *Forty Years on the Frontier*, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1925), II, 139-147.

As State Supervisor of the Federal Writers Project, 1939-42, Michael Kennedy planned and directed the research for a three-volume *History of the Livestock Industry in Montana*; unfortunately never finished due to World War II. He did finish *Copper Camp*; *Land of Nakoda*; *Montana: A Profile*; and other FWP books on Montana. He is now doing research and writing for the Historical Society of Montana.



James Stuart, lesser known brother of Granville, actually deserves much more historical credit than he has been accorded. Returning with Granville in 1857 from California, he located in the Deer Lodge Valley, at Bannack, Fort Benton, Helena, and Virginia City. Subsequently James, unlike Granville, worked at almost every frontier enterprise except stockraising, until his death in 1873.

mouth of the Musselshell. No settlers but a few scattered buffalo. Spring round-up was over in August then we put up a couple of stacks of hay to feed a few saddle horses and milk cows. It was then time to gather beef for shipping to Chicago. A man by the name of Hass contracted the steers to be delivered at Miles City. The price was \$56.00 per head. We gathered twelve hundred head of three and four year old steers. It took twelve days from the time we left the range to Miles City. It was all open country, we crossed the Yellowstone near Fort Keogh. Tallied the cattle and put them in the stock yards.

We had no cattle or sheep trouble on our range, some sheep came in later.⁵ The first settler to come on the range was in '82. We were working a round-up on McDonald Creek where Mons Teigen's Ranch is now. A covered wagon drove up and I rode out to see what he wanted. He had a wife and a couple of kids and said his name was Bowen. He said he got burned out in California and lost all he had and had to come to Montana looking for a ranch. He asked me who the land belonged to and I told him, "Uncle Sam." He drove down on the creek and camped.

Coming from Miles City with the outfit, on Willow Creek north of the Musselshell, we spied a couple buffalo and thought we would kill one and get some fresh meat. We lit into them on our horses. Going over a rise on the prairie right in front of us and the buffalo was a man on the running gears of a wagon; one of the buffalo ran across the wagon, broke the reach and the team ran away with the front wheels leaving the man with the rear axles. We quit the buffalo, caught his team, roped up his reach and he went on his way happy. It was Bowen on his way to Junction for lumber to build his cabin.

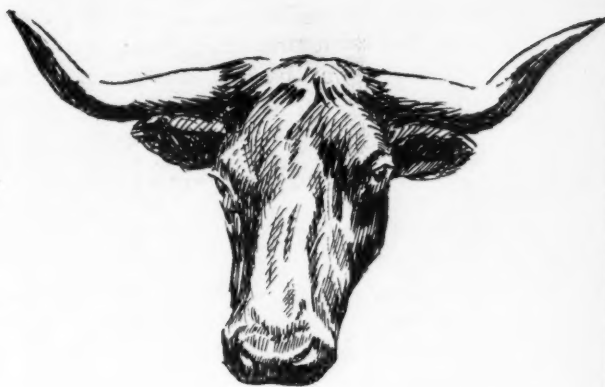
Fall round-up over we pulled into the ranch and most of the men were let out for the winter. My brother and I rode the range and one man looked after the saddle horses. During the winter there was some trouble with Indians coming in and killing cattle. In January we run onto some Crows camped on the range. There was twenty tepees. We saw that they had been killing cattle—they had a permit from the agent to go hunting. We reported to the ranch and Mr. Stuart went up to Fort Maginnis two miles from the ranch. The commanding officer said he would send some soldiers to escort them back to the reservation. We was to go with them as guides. They went out about five miles and camped and the Sergeant said that was as far as they was going that day. We figured at that rate it would take them ten days to get to the Indian camp. We took our pack

horse left them and went to the Indian camp that night and told the Indians that the soldiers was on the way to put them back on the reservation—so they pulled out. We went with them a couple of days until they got off the range. The soldiers was out ten or twelve days and reported—no Indians.⁶

The spring of '83 other outfits had come in on the range. Coburn and Sieben located on Flatwillow; Dovenspeck on Yellow Water; and an English outfit, the Circle Bar, on Crooked Creek. The first Texas cattle came on the range the others was from Oregon. Coburn's brand was Quarter-Circle C on left thigh; Sieben brand a diamond on the left rib; the Pioneer brand was D-H-S; that was Davis, Hauser, and Stuart.

The owners called a meeting to be held at the D-H-S Ranch to set a date for the round-up, when and where to start, and to elect a captain—I was elected captain for the year. They agreed to auction the mavericks off each round-up; the proceeds to pay the captain and build branding corrals on the range.

Cowboys got \$40.00 per month, board and room and furnished their own outfit; saddle and bed. There was no forty hour a week law then, at times we worked twenty-four a day; we had never heard of overtime. Mr. Stuart told me that if we wanted to buy a few cattle with our wages we could run them with the outfit. We bought thirty head from Frank Day over on Spring Creek and branded them 99 left ribs and 9 left thigh then had it recorded. That was when G. P. Burnett and I started into the cattle business.⁷ We was pardners until 1913, we then divided our holdings.



In August, 1884 [July seems more correct] we was shoeing horses at the ranch getting ready for fall round-up when a man and a boy rode into the ranch from Pease Bottom on the Yellowstone. He told Mr. Stuart he had had fifty head of horses stolen and that he had trailed them to the mouth of the Musselshell on the Missouri River and with field glasses had seen his horses in a corral and five men who looked to be branding them. Granville sent for me to come to his office and told me to take what men I wanted and go down and get the horses. "We had lost horses and so had the other stockmen," he went on to say, "and since there is no sheriff and no judge in this part of Montana, I think it is time to do something about it. So if you find the horses belonging to this man have been stolen use your own judgment in dealing with the thieves and I will be back of anything you do." We went in on them at daylight one morning. They had a lookout scouting around; he saw us about the time we saw him and rode to give the alarm. A boy named Len Patterson and myself was on good horses so we headed him off told him to unbuckle and drop his arms on the ground. I noticed he was riding a Pioneer Cattle Company horse. The four other men were in the cabin asleep. The horses was in the corral. Their brands had been burned out but the man and boy said that they was their horses—they should have known because they had driven them all the

⁶ Granville Stuart noted that Henry McDonald had 2,000 head of sheep on Arrow Creek two years earlier. By 1884 there were some 50,000. *Ibid.*, 140, 209.

⁶ Stuart and other early ranchers were in constant turmoil with both the Military and Indian Agents over this matter. His tirade is a masterpiece of invective. *Ibid.*, 150-165.

⁷ Many men who started on this basis were the Cattle Kings of later years.

way up from Nevada. They took them and was well pleased.⁸

On our way back to the ranch a man thrown in with us said he was going up to see Granville Stuart and asked if he could go along; I told him he could. He told Granville he had gotten in with a tough bunch and he wanted to quit them and go straight. He also said there was fifteen men down on the Missouri river that had about 100 head of stolen horses and that he would go and show him where they were. Granville told him if his story proved to be true he would help him out. His name was Bill Cantrell, he had at one time been a buffalo hunter and from then on he went by the name of 'Flopping Bill.' Granville got him appointed stock inspector. He later got killed by a train in St. Paul. He led us to the rustlers camp alright and we found 80 head of horses.⁹ The next morning after the smoke had cleared away we caught our pack horses to get some breakfast. We found our grub was soaked with muddy Missouri water from swimming the river. We was 100 miles from the ranch without grub and there wasn't a chance to get anything from the rustlers camp since both of their cabins was burned down. Back of one of the cabins was a stable in which two horses and a lot of saddles were also burned. Right then a steamboat came up the river, Granville hailed the boat but it passed us up—he did not like that—so he says "Get on your horses we will head him off." When the captain saw a lot of Winchesters and a bunch of hungry looking riders, he landed. Granville told him that we was stockmen who had some bad luck with our mess outfit and that we wanted to buy some bacon and flour. The captain shows us the commissary and says, "Help yourselves, no charge." The horses we found was all claimed by the owners, some of them belonged in Wyoming, some were Mounted Police horses from Canada, branded MP on the hoof. We wasn't bothered with rustlers for several years

and then the trucks got into operation.¹⁰

In the fall of 1884 I went to Wyoming and in the spring of '85 I went to work for Ryan Brothers on the Musselshell. They sent me to rep. on the Maginnis range. In the string of horses they gave me was a race horse; Jeff Ryan asked me not to rope or cut cattle on him. One morning about thirty of us left the wagon to make a drive. Suddenly out of a coulee popped a big buck elk—everyone down with his rope. I happened to be on this race horse and I knew when I saw the elk that I was the only one in the race, when we busted the elk he either broke his back or his neck, he never got up.

⁸ Without assaulting the ethics of "frontier justice," or of the men who set themselves up above "the law," certain facts are pertinent here. Bill Burnett, like many other respectable cattlemen participated in a vigilante action which for intensity and violence surpassed that of Virginia City-Alder Gulch of 20 years earlier. But it did not have the published impact, nor will it ever have. Most details and facts of the Judith Basin "Stranglers" incident died with the participants; or with the enforced silence of many who dared never speak of it. Granville Stuart acknowledged that at the time "there arose a great hue and cry in certain localities over what was termed 'the arrogance of the Cattle Kings.' The cattlemen were accused of hiring 'gunmen' to raid the country and drive the small ranchers and sheepmen off the range." Then Stuart was constrained to deny, "... there was not a grain of truth in this talk." Some will contend that this element did enter in, just as it almost inevitably does in vigilante action. At any rate, from 15 to 18 men were killed or hung in 28 days in the summer of 1884 in this "Strangler's Incident," and four others not directly in the pattern of the Vigilantes, met violent deaths. In Alder Gulch, in more than a year's time, with many more people involved, some 25 hangings were attributed to the miners' Vigilante action. (The most complete published study of "The Central Montana Vigilante Raids of 1884" ever done, written by Oscar O. Mueller, appears in the *Montana Magazine of History*, Vol. I, No. 1). It is noticeable, here, that Bill Burnett's statement avoids specific mention of any hangings, or killings.

⁹ Characteristically, Burnett fails to mention an earlier commendable action near the mouth of the Musselshell River, involving the hanging or killing of Billy Downs and Charlie Owen. Although Downs had wrong-branded horses in possession at his trading post on the Missouri, he was known as an honest trader, and so declared himself. He was defended against the Vigilantes by Burnett, but to no avail. Both Granville Stuart and Burnett later condemned this unwarranted action.

¹⁰ This is a bad memory span. "Rubber-tired Rustlers," who loaded stolen stock onto trucks right on the range, then drove quickly to markets many miles distant, were a much later innovation.

Mr. and Mrs. James Fergus in 1879, three years before the venerable Judith Basin pioneer said that the Burnett brothers looked like "a couple of horse thieves," to him.

In '88 we borrowed money and commenced buying cattle. The first cattle we bought over in the Gallatin Valley near Bozeman. In August 1888 we bought 300 head of steers from one man; I don't remember his name but we paid \$8.00 for yearlings, \$12.00 for two's; \$16.00 for three's and drove them to the ranch. The next year 1889 the three's and four's netted us \$56.00 a head in Chicago.

That fall we had gathered 1,000 head of beef to ship to Chicago. We was camped on Willow Creek north of the Musselshell. A boy we called Fat Dawson and I was on last guard when at daylight we saw a black bear and killed it. Matt Ryan was with the wagon and at breakfast we told him about the bear, he said he was going to kill a beef but that we would eat some bear meat so he sent two of the boys to bring it in. The mess wagon was loaded with beds and they threw the bear on top. Matt had a fine team of horses he had just driven from Leavenworth, Kansas that he was working as lead team on the mess wagon. As the cook started to hitch on they spied the bear and stampeded dragging him about a hundred yards through the sage brush. They got away and one of them we did not get until the next spring over in the brakes of the Missouri, one hundred miles from the ranch—but we eat bear meat just the same.

In the year of 1886 there was a drouth so we moved the cattle up near the Little Rockies across the Missouri. Everyone knows about the winter of 1886-87. My brother and I had 400 head of cattle in '86 and in '87. We gathered 41 head. We bought 160 acres from a homesteader near where Gilt Edge is now and got an old mower and hay-rake with the outfit. We had no team so we broke an old range bull and a stove-up cow horse and put up 20 ton of hay to feed the saddle horses.



In 1892 we bought the Pioneer Cattle Company ranch for \$12.00 an acre. In the '90's the homesteaders commenced coming in. We used the range till 1915 when they got to shooting and dogging our cattle. We had seen it coming and got quite a lot of land ourselves. 1919 was a dry year followed by a hard winter. We lost lots of cattle. The only hay I could buy was slough grass from the Dakotas at \$40.00 a ton—cattle starved to death eating it. In 1922 I lost what money I had when the banks closed, I had seen several drouths, panics, and hard winters, but the seven year drouth, depression and hordes of grasshoppers put me on the rocks. What cattle the federal government did not kill I had to sacrifice. In 1935 I did not need a pencil to figure how I came out.

I didn't have anything when I started and wound up with a rope and a bunch of land that without stock isn't worth paying taxes on. The rope isn't any good because there isn't any cattle in the country. I think I came out a little to the good at that—I had a good time and now I haven't anything to worry about—I'm just drifting along with the tumble weeds.

I'm not writing this to make a hero or tophand out of myself, similar things have happened to all cowboys that have punched cattle from Texas to the Canadian line.

DODSON'S DEATH

EDITED BY GEORGE F. WEISEL

THE DIARY OF JOHN F. DODSON; HIS JOURNEY FROM ILLINOIS TO HIS DEATH AT FORT OWEN IN 1852.

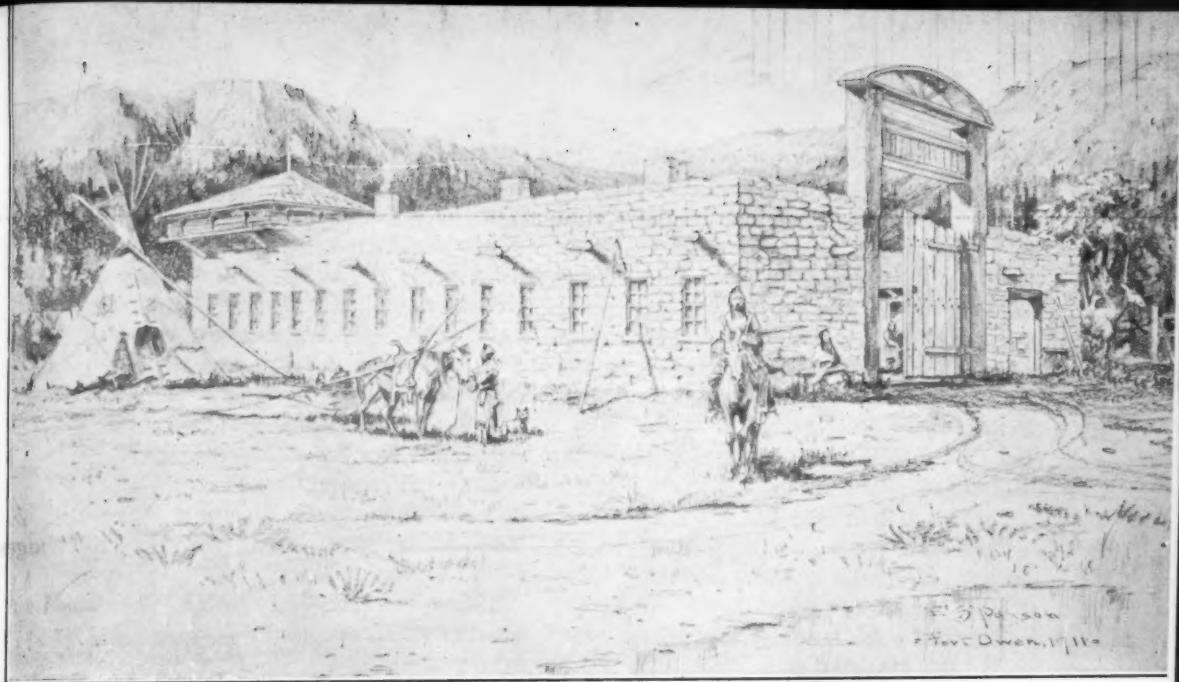
There exist but few diaries written by men who crossed the plains to Montana prior to the discovery of gold in the state. Practically no one went to Montana in those years. It was a vast territory unknown to all except Indians and a few traders, trappers and Jesuit missionaries. The diary by John F. Dodson¹ was written while he was journeying over two thousand miles from Buffalo Grove, Illinois, to Fort Hall, Idaho—on the regular emigrant road—and from Fort Hall to Fort Owen in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana. Although Dodson's daily entries are almost devoid of descriptive material, and although his reference to individuals by name are few, his diary is of value for the regularly noted distances traveled each day and the route and camp sites. Also, he mentions many of the difficulties met by emigrants on the road. His terse writing makes the events more striking than those related in many of the flowery journals kept by later travelers.

It if had not been for the little notebook of a diary he kept, Dodson would have been among the many early pioneers who are lost to record. As it is, there is little information concerning him. His life on the frontier was short, and only its violent ending is recorded in the journals kept at Fort Owen. There are

suggestions in the diary that he was a young man of about seventeen who had left his home and parents in Pennsylvania for the opportunities of California, hiring as a herder in a wagon train assembled at Buffalo Grove. At Fort Hall he met Frank Owen, a trader who had ridden down from the mountain wilderness to replenish his trade goods. Owen hired the unattached youth to work on improving the post in the Bitterroot Valley which his brother, Major John Owen, had acquired from the Jesuit missionaries in 1850.

In the following reproduction of the diary, the spelling and punctuation follow the original. Inserts deemed necessary for clarification appear in brackets. To ease the reading, sentences not ending with periods are set off from each other by a triple space. The route of the Oregon Trail, over which Dodson traveled as far west as Fort Hall, is too well documented to warrant a description here or in lengthy footnotes. To follow its details, the reader may refer to A. B. Hulbert's excellent *The American Transcontinental Trails* published by the Stuart Commission on Western History, Colorado Springs. A more general idea of the course is easily followed on *A Map of Northwestern United States and Neighboring Canadian Provinces* prepared by the National Geographic Society for June, 1941. Important historical trails are traced on this map. Also, the points of interest along the way have been extolled again and again. Interesting publications covering these are *The Bozeman Trail* by G. R. Hebard and C. King, published in 1922 by the Arthur

¹This is the second appearance for George F. Weisel, an Associate Professor at the University of Montana. Although his field is Ichthyology, this native Montanan evinces real interest in frontier history. He is the author of a series of scientific articles, some of which provide the Indian names for many of our fish and animals; and is now editing a book on Fort Owen, which should be forthcoming this summer.



Painting of old Fort Owen by the Missoula artist, E. S. Paxson.

H. Clark Company; *The Narrative of Samuel Hancock*, published in 1927 by Robert M. McBride and Company; W. J. Ghent's *The Road to Oregon*, published in 1929 by Longmans, Green and Company; *The March of the Mounted Riflemen*, edited by R. W. Settle and published in 1940 by the Arthur H. Clark Company; and in many of the journals edited by R. G. Thwaites in his *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846* published in 1906 by the Arthur H. Clark Company.

THE DIARY BEGINS

April 13th 1852 Started from Buffalo Grove for California by way of Sterling distance 14

14th passed Como, Lyndon, Erie, 20

15th from Erie to the Mississippi river 14

16th to Hampton in the afternoon Distance 9, ½

17th to Moline in the forenoon Distance 7

18th We laid still at Moline on that day for it was sunday

19th we started from Moline and crossed the Mississippi at the steam fer-

ry at Moline drove ten miles 10 roads very muddy

20th Drove to Muscatine through the bluffs along the Mississippi river distance 20

21st from Muscatine to Cedar river and through the swamp 10

22d Down Cedar river till noon and then laid up for grass 4 or for want of grain.

23d went out a hunting in the forenoon but did not have very good luck killed but one red squirrel rained in the afternoon so that we done nothing of any account

24th we have not done anything of any account to day as it has been rainy and cold for the season

¹ The diary is deposited in the Montana State Historical Library, Helena. It was formerly possessed by Judge Frank H. Woody, one of Western Montana's earliest pioneers, and was evidently donated to the library by him or his heirs (F. H. Woody, "A Sketch of the Early History of Western Montana," *Centr. Hist. Soc. Mont.*, 1896, Vol. II, p. 92). It is a small notebook, measuring 6 by 3¾ inches. The original cover has been replaced with a new leather binding. The entries are all legibly made in pencil. On the flyleaf is written, "John F. Dodson's Book bought at Moline April 17th 18/52."

25th Sunday. We have set in the house most of the time to day but I was to meeting this forenoon weather cold and cloudy

26th The weather has been more moderate and the sun has shone most of the time we have done nothing of much importance to day for we are getting rather tired of laying still and have not much to amuse ourselves at

27th we traveled to Columbia [Columbus] City 14

28th we traveled 13

29th Through Washington City and across a wet prairie and camped on it 15

30th we traveled 15

May 1st we traveled 10 miles

2d we traveled 8

3d we traveled 13

4th we traveled 12

5th we traveled 14

6th we traveled 3 rained in the afternoon pretty hard

7th we traveled 10

8th we traveled 17

9th Sunday we traveled 14 to the Des Moines City and crossed two ferries

10th we traveled 15 and camped on the prairies out of sight of any habitations

11th we traveled 18

12th we traveled till 10 o'clock and then we stopped and dried and aired our provision till four then we drove 8 miles all day 14

13th we traveled on the big prairie and camped on the same 16 the roads very good we had a hail storm and some rain there is no settlements on this prairie only one House and that has been settled very lately

14th we saw a great deal of dead stock to day roads good but very crooked camped on the left of the road good water and plenty of grass distance 18 George Peek took the stam speed [stampede] and ran $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile

15th we traveled till 11 o'clock and then we laid up for Sunday we had a good time [of] it to day distance 8

16th we did not get up very Early this [morning] as we have had but little rest for a long time we are within 60 miles of Ranesville or Council Bluffs road has been all the time very good with the exception of some sloughs which have been very bad but we crossed them with out any difficulty weather windy and cold

17th we had good roads but very crooked weather cool distance 18

18th this morning was chilly and cool but clear we passed some timber and some streams with bad bridges roads good Distance 20

18th we traveled across the bluff prairie roads rough and uneven weather clear and cool Distance 16

19th I went back after an ox to Silver creek my company has gone to Mosketoes Creek Distance 20

20th I went to where I thought they were camped but did not find them but searched all day for them without success rained most all day Distance 12.

21st commenced raining Early in the morning cleared off about noon roads bad went to where I left my ox and he was gone and then I started on the back trail to find him went as far as Silver Creek but did not find him stayed at a public House and pawned [pawned] my Pocket Knife to pay my bill for I had no money back Distance 14

22nd Clear as a bell this morning roads some muddy found my steer about 2 miles from National Botany come as far as Ranesville stayed there all night

23d went out after breakfast and found Denby and then went to the camp. Ranesville is quite a picturesque place it is built right in a deep ravine in the bluff the buildings are mostly made of logs no large houses of any kind

25th we did not travel any today for we were getting things and fixing our wagons the weather is mild

26th we started for the ferry [across the Missouri] and arrived there safe we had a shower in the afternoon but it

cleared off very warm and sultry Distance 12

27th The sun shines this morning and it is very warm we stayed at the ferry till noon before we could get across then went about five miles and camped by a little grove roads good 5

28th we had first rate roads and passed through a grass country we passed several trains and good many camps we stopped at the lower ferry on Elkhorn river Distance 22

29th to Platt[e] river 15 the road good and level good wood and water grass good

30th Sunday we have laid still all day and not done anything but herd cattle we see plenty of Indians every day now we had a visit from four of them this morning and some of our Co made them a present of a cow that had got hurt and could not travel they were much pleased with it and drove it off about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile from the camp killed and dressed it some of us went to see them dress it they do it up right there is but few butchers that would do it quicker and cut it up so that they unjointed every joint in its body Rained a little this morning but it clear now The country through here is level and sandy soil the Platt river is a very muddy stream but withal beautiful the banks are picturesque with cotton wood in abundance

31st Along the Platt to the second bend and camp 22

June 1st to the second bend of P. river 15 we camped on the prairie near the river water pretty good grass plenty wood very scarce²

2d you will pass long lake as you leave the river no timber on either side of it but good water and grass

3rd we had some sandy roads but not very bad we traveled to the Coup fork [Loup River, Nebraska] and crossed part of our wagons but did not get them all over the river for there came up a gale about dark rained some 12

4th we ferried the rest of our wagons

this morning laid by till noon to wash and cook the weather cool this morning but warmer this afternoon we drove on up the river and camped by a little lake good water and grass Distance 9

5th we have laid still to day on account of a sick woman being worst we have not done anything of any account to day the weather is clear and cool

6th Sun Traveled along loop fork bottoms found plenty of grass wood and water weather cool but clear Distance 18

7th we started at 7 o'clock and traveled till 11 and drove 11 miles the weather cool and cloudy. roads good. 11 at noon a child that was in company was taken sick and we started on at 1 but we buried it at 3 o'clock the same day. Distance 8

8th we traveled across some flat bottom and then over some uneven sand bluffs Distance 18

8th we buried a young man in our company last night we buried two more of our company to day and some more is sick

9th we buried a boy this morning³ traveled to wood river by noon roads

² The Oregon Trail did not follow one well defined route, but had many cut-offs and feeder roads. Dodson's train took the most northern of the four principle emigrant roads going west to Fort Laramie. It was frequently referred to as the Mormon Trail. This road held to the north shore of the North Platte from Council Bluffs (A. B. Hulbert, *The American Transcontinental Trails*, series IV, Vols. I-IV, published by the Stuart Commission on Western History, Colorado Springs, 1926).

³ These stricken people undoubtedly died from cholera. Although five were buried in three days, the outfit was comparatively fortunate, for 1852 was a year of an exceptionally bad epidemic. Ezra Meeker, who crossed the plains that year, wrote: "The scourge of cholera on the Platte in 1852 is far beyond my power of description. — The scourge came from the south, as we met the trains that crossed the Platte and congested the Trail, one might almost say, both day and night. — Mrs. M. E. Jones, now of North Yakima, relates that forty people of their train died in one day and two nights before reaching the crossing of the Platte. — A family of seven persons—all died of cholera and were buried in one grave. — While camped with a sick brother four days a short distance above Grand Island, by actual count of one day and estimate for three, sixteen hundred wagons passed by, an a neighboring burial place grew from a few to fifty-two fresh graves (E. Meeker, *The Ox Team or the Old Oregon Trail*, published by the author, 4th ed., New York, 1907, pp. 80-81).

good and dry mostly over a prairie that is so level that you could distinguish any object as far as you could see we drove off the road 2 miles to camp Distance 20

10th the roads were good and the weather was cool but clear the sun shines warm in this country but there is always a breeze and sometimes a very hard one Distance 20

11th we traveled across the bottoms of the Platt all day camped on the road Distance 20

12th we had good roads and made a good drive the weather is very warm today but tonight looks like rain. D. 20

13th Passed Elm Creek and camped on Buffalo Creek at noon and then went down to the river and camped for over Sunday weather rainy Distance 18

14th we have had a great time to day for some of our girls are wide awake now I thank you the weather threatens rain to day

15th we were aroused last night by guns firing near the camp and there was some quick movements made for action but it was a buffalo we suppose as we saw over 15 in sight of camp this morning we drove about 16

16th rained last night and rain this morning so we have to lay still this forenoon in the afternoon we drove 10

17th Drove across the lone bluff and camped by the river. Distance 20 weather fair -

18th went out a buffalo hunting this morning and saw about two hundred and fifty shot several but did not get any but some of the boys got one we traveled thirty miles before we got to the camp. the train drove about 20 the weather is wet and rainy

19th we had something of a rain storm last night and it blew our tent down and we could not keep it up to do our best we drove 13

20th this morning is pleasant and we drove till noon and then it rained drove part of the afternoon we went a Buf-

falo hunting but found them scarce shot two antelope teams laid still as it is the last timber we have for two hundred miles

21st we have not drove far this morning as we had an upset about 9 o'clock to day got our things very wet and we have stopped to dry them started at 2 o'clock and drove till six D. 13

22d we drove over some of the worst sand bluffs you ever saw⁴ crossed North bluff fork six rods wide 2 feet deep muddy water quicksand bottom but good crossing camped at a little branch near the river plenty of buffalo chips and good grass. D. 20 I forgot to say that I bursted my revolver tonight but it did not hurt me at all it threw three [the?] barrel off and bent the band the cause was a ball not being down to the powder

22d we crossed Rattlesnake river and traveled near the Platt all day and camped on the bank of it Distance 23

23 we traveled over some bad roads and some sand bluffs and muddy places and camped on the bank of the Platt 18

24th we drove to the Post Office at Ash Hollow in the forenoon and in the afternoon we drove to the first bluff and camped for the night⁵ Distance 18

25th we drove to Crab creek Distance 20 weather fair but hot -

26th we drove half a day and laid still in the afternoon and I went to see the cobble Hills [Court House Rock?] as they are called they are one of the greatest curiosities of the world and the highest peaks are 150 feet above the surface of Platt river. Distance 12

⁴ On the north side of the present artificial Lake McConaughy.

⁵ "Ash Hollow will also be remembered by most Forty-Niners for the congestion of teams and the log cabin or 'Ash Grove Hotel,' the walls of which had become a sort of general postoffice. Numerous advertisements in manuscript were posted on its walls descriptive of lost cattle, horses, etc., etc.; and inside, in a recess, a large number of letters had been deposited, addressed to persons in almost every quarter of the globe, with requests that those who should pass would convey them to the nearest post-office in the states" (A. B. Hulbert, *Forty-Niners*, Boston, 1932, p. 101).

27th we had an Alcala trial on the plains today and had a great time of it.⁶ The cause was about a couple of young men that camped with us one night and an old man was sick that was with them and he died and a company took them up for poisoning him but they did not prove anything against them so they let them go Distance for to day Sunday 14

28th we crossed some sand bluffs and camped on Platt weather fair Distance 16 opposite chimney rock

29th we drove to Scotts Bluff south side of the river D 23

30th We drove on the bottom of the Platt Distance 18

July 1st we drove over some marshes and low places to where the roads join the river Distance 18

2d we drove up very near opposite Fort Laramie and camped for the night we had quite a storm this afternoon some hail with it but it was of short duration and it soon cleared off and the blue sky appeared and all was smiling again we went and fixed a swing on a tree and had quite a time of it for the girls were full of life and gaiety Distance 16

3d we have laid still to day for the purpose of shoeing our oxen but we have not made much yet but some the the men has gone to the fort tonight to make shoes and nails. I have done but little to day but hunt cattle we missed 14 head about 10 o'clock and we hunted till about 3 o'clock before we found any of them and then one of our men found 9 head of them in an indian carelle [corral] and they were determined not to let them go but one of the men being pretty resolute and not having any fire-arms seized a club and walked right in and drove them all out and drove them back to the camp and the other cattle was found near by the carelle

4th we laid still and shod some cattle and washed some clothes and I wrote two letters to my folks

5th we drove up the river and camped on the bank about noon. I went to the

fort and mailed my letters the fort is more of a place than I thought it was there is a large store and some shops and any amount of trading stands⁷ there is a trader camped within a few rods of us this afternoon and appears like a man. we have set 13 tires to day and have done it as good as you can do it in the States. D. 8

6th we drove over the high ridges till [we] come to the river again. D. 18.

7th we drove to the cold springs and camped for the night. D. 8

8th we drove down to the Platt and camped for the night but we had poor grass for our teams D. 22

9th we yoked our oxen and drove about a mile and then stopped to set some tire and shoe some cattle and laid still all day 1

10th we drove over some bad and rough roads D 23 weather fair

11th Sunday morning got up and started before sunrise and drove 3 miles to grass and camped to get breakfast and grass our cattle we drove about 20

12th we drove about 20

13th we drove some 18 I have for-

⁶ Alcala was a term adopted from the Spanish. In regions under Spanish influence, the Alcala was a town official with powers of magistrate (*A Dictionary of American English, Chicago, 1938*). The word was used by the California gold miners to describe an impromptu trial, or a trial not conducted by vested authorities of the United States government.

⁷ Fort Laramie occupied the left bank of the North Fork of Platte River, about three-fourths of a mile above the mouth of the Laramie. It was first established as Fort William in 1834 by William Sublette and Robert Campbell of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. In 1849, it became a military post for protection of emigrants against Indian depredations, and was supposed to furnish provisions to travelers at government cost (L. R. Hafen and F. M. Young, *Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West, 1834-1890*, Glendale, 1938).

Thomas Turnbull, who tarried at the fort just a month before Dodson did, described it in his journal: "At the opposite side of the ferry there is a blacksmith & waggon makers shop. The garrison & houses are built with spanish brick; number about 12 houses. The garrison is about 2 miles from the ferry. Hundreds of ponies, horses, oxen, mules & wagons around here—. —at the fort hard bread \$13 per c. Loaf bread worth 10 cts in Chicago, 60 cts here. Tobacco 6 s per lb. Vinegar \$2 pr gallon. Tea \$2 pr lb." (F. L. Paxson, "T. Turnbull's Travels from the United States across the Plains to California," *Proc. State Hist. Soc. Wis.*, 1913, pp. 170-171).

gotten to tend to keeping my journal for a few days since last Tuesday so that I have no distance or anything

17th we have not started this morning yet for we swam our cattle over the river and one of the men got one of our horses in a quicksand bed and has not got her out as yet⁸

18th we had some trouble this morning with our cattle in getting them across the river. today we left the Platt river for good traveled about 20.

19th we drove to the sweet [Sweetwater] river and camped on this side of it Distance 17

20th we drove to the devils gate and stopped to take a look at it but I did not go we camped on the sweet water Distance 18

21st we drove past the government store and camped on the Sweet water again D. 27⁹

22d we took the green horns cut off this morning and drove about 5 miles out of our way D 18

23d we drove across the short desert only 25 miles there is plenty of dead stock on this stretch D 27

24th we yoked up and drove about five miles and laid over all day to let our cattle rest and grass 5

25th we drove over some rocky ridges and hilly roads and camped on Strawberry creek D 18

26th we drove to sweetwater and camped for the last time Distance 18

27th we drove to Pacific creek and camped for the night¹⁰ D 15

28th we drove across the 25 mile stretch D 25

29th we drove to Big Sandy and laid the rest of that day. Distance 8

30th we drove down the river and camped D 16

31st we drove to green river and we had a rain storm in the afternoon and we had to stop the teams on account of the wind we got to green river at 8 o'clock at night. D. 25

August 1st Sunday morning we have not started this morning for our cattle

was drove hard yesterday it rained last night but it is clear this morning we laid still all day and we had an awful storm in the afternoon that lasted about an hour some hail and rain and the wind blew a perfect gale it came very near turning over some of our wagons but we held them down as well as we could

2d we crossed green river this morning and drove over to a creek [Fontenelle Creek?] 15

3d we left the creek about 8 o'clock this morning and drove about 15¹¹

4th we drove down very near to 2d branch of green river [Hams Fork]. Distance 18

5th we drove over to 3d Brook [Smith's Fork?] and camped Distance 20

6th we drove down on bear river had very good roads Distance 18

7th we drove to the road that is made around a mountain and camped Distance 15

8th Sunday we laid over till four o'clock and hitched up and drove about 4

⁸ This ford was across the Platte near Casper, Wyoming. The wagons were now traversing the Sweetwater branch of the Oregon Trail.

⁹ There were a group of buildings, including a store, on this part of the Sweetwater. In his itinerary of the route from Leavenworth to Salt Lake City, Granville Stuart noted: "Road [along the Sweetwater] passes a blacksmith shop and store at the bridge just above Independence Rock, six miles from camp; two and a half miles from camp it passes the 'Devil's Gate' and mail station. The Sweetwater here runs between two perpendicular cliffs, presenting a most singular and striking appearance.—

"This stream takes its name from its waters having a kind of sweetish taste, caused by the large quantity of alkali held in solution by its waters, not enough, however, to cause any apparent deleterious effects." (G. Stuart, *Montana As It Is*, New York, 1865, p. 133)."

The Greenhorn's Cut-off, which the wagons took from near the store, was a short one, eliminating a bend in the Sweetwater.

¹⁰ The train crossed the Continental Divide over the famous South Pass. The sloping gap has such a gradual approach and the mountains around it are so rounded that it is no wonder that Dodson was not impressed by the passage from one great watershed to another. Pacific Creek drains into the Big Sandy River, which in turn enters the Green River of the Colorado.

¹¹ They followed Sublett's Cut-off from the Big Sandy to Soda Springs.

9th we drove to the circular bottom D 20

10th we drove to bear river and camp for the rest of the day Distance 8

11th to Soda Springs and turned out for noon and drove in the afternoon Distance 17

12th we took the old Oregon or Fort Hall road and we passed some Soda Springs and crater and old pieces of rocks that had been melted and throwed up in piles¹² the Distance 17

13th we have not started yet this morning we drove up to the top of the mountain and camp about 4 o clock we had a very pleasant place plenty of wood and water and good grass Distance 16

14th we had a very rough road to day it being hilly and stony we saw snow to left of the road and some of the boys went and got some D 16

15th we have started this in good season and drove to the green [Portneuf] river the road was sandy and heavy Distance 16

16th we hitched up and drove almost to the fort [Hall] and laid over the rest of the day.¹³ Distance 4

17th I went up to the fort this morning and hired to a man by the name of Owen¹⁴ he calculates to go to fort Owen and build a mill he has but one more white hand here and one indian he gives me 25 dollars a month till spring he says my work will be light mostly to work about the fort fort Owen is about 300 miles north of this in the mountains

18th I have done [nothing] to day but to help cook and eat after it was cooked

19th we went to cross the [Snake] river today but did not succeed in doing so we shall cross tomorrow or next day

20th we have not got across the river yet but think we will before night we did not get over the river to day

21st we crost the river about noon to day and traveled over a very barren looking country Distance 12

22d we traveled over a very pretty country but there is but little growing upon it but sage and bunch grass D 35

23d we started at 4 o clock and rode till six we got off the trail and could not find it for some time¹⁵ 30

¹² This was in the old geyser basin of Soda Springs, Idaho. When drunk, the water from the springs "fumed from the stomach like the soda water of the shops." The mountain men, who were more manly than the emigrants in their liquid desires, imaginatively called this area of welling waters "Beer Springs." There are many early descriptions of the natural phenomenon (see J. C. Fremont, Sen. Doc., 28 Cong. 2 ses., 174, 1845, pp. 135-138; and R. G. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, Cleveland, 1906, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 295-298; Vol. XXX, pp. 80-85).

The road forked just west of Soda Springs, one branch going to Fort Hall and on to Oregon, the other went to Raft River over Hudspeith's Cut-off for Salt Lake or California.

¹³ Fort Hall was built in 1834 by the independent fur trader Nathaniel J. Wyeth on the Snake River, about fifteen miles northwest of the present city of Pocatello, Idaho. The post later passed into the hands of the Hudson Bay Company, which operated it up to 1856. Like most forts in the region, it was an adobe structure with corner bastions perforated by holes for firearms. A brisk trade was conducted with the emigrants, as it was one of the few settlements on the road to Oregon ("The Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth 1831-6," edited by F. G. Young, *Sources of the Hist. of Ore.*, Eugene, 1899, Vol. I, p. 227; R. G. Thwaites, *op. cit.*, Vol. XXX, p. 86; H. H. Bancroft, *History of Washington, Idaho, and Montana, 1845-1886*, San Francisco, 1890, p. 140; and *History of Oregon*, p. 112).

¹⁴ There are only a few hints in the journals and letters of Major John Owen concerning the journeys made from his post in 1852; but coinciding with Dodson's day of arrival at Fort Owen, the journals briefly note that on September 4, 1852, "Frank arrived." This was Frank Owen, brother of John Owen. Therefore, it must have been Frank who hired Dodson at Fort Hall. Furthermore, previous entries in the journal indicate that Major Owen was at his fort in August and the first of September (*The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen*, edited by S. Dumbear and P. C. Phillips, New York, Vol. I, 1927, pp. 46-48).

Major John Owen came west in 1849 as a sutler with Lt. Colonel W. W. Loring's rifle regiment. He spent the winter near Fort Hall, and in the spring set off on a trading expedition to the north. In the Bitterroot Valley he took the opportunity of purchasing St. Mary's Mission and its improvements from the Jesuits, who were abandoning it for a number of reasons, a major one being fear of the vicious Blackfeet. The Major, with the aid of his brother, immediately set about building the most complete and impressive trading post for that era in Western Montana (*Ibid.*, pp. 1-19).

¹⁵ There was no emigrant road from Fort Hall north into Montana, only Indian trails used by a few trappers and traders. This was ten years before the discovery of gold at Grasshopper Creek and the subsequent opening of the territory to settlement.

As Owen's party used pack animals, they were able to travel further each day than Dodson had formerly with the lumbering covered wagons.

24th we traveled 25 nothing of importance

25th we rode up the bluff and then we went up a canyon [Gilmore Divide, Idaho] the greatest place I ever rode horse flesh in my life Distance 28

26th we have passed some of the roughest roads that I have seen since I left the State of Penn Distance 25

27th we have had good roads to day Distance 32

28th we rode over some bluffs and followed the waters of the missouri river Distance 30¹⁶

29th we started on the trail but turned to the right up some things that we would call mountains in the State but they call them bluffs here Distance 20

30th we shot an antelope last night [in the Big Hole Valley] and such another feast as we had we had some boiled and some fried and some roasted this was a supper the States cannot boast of Distance 25

31st we got on the right trail this morning and are now going to fort Owen we had some rain last night and we could see plenty of snow all around us this morning we camped about 3 o clock Distance 18

September 1st we traveled over the dividing ridge [Gibbon's Pass] Distance 30

2d we have very good roads for this country Distance 30

3d we only made a short drive to day for we had a horse that was rather the worse for wear Distance 20

4th we rode to fort Owen by 4 o clock Distance 25 I saw something that was queer there was snow all around us and roses in full bloom in the valley where we rode

5th Sunday I have not done much this morning but eat my breakfast Fort Owen is situated on a gradual slope to the west and very prettyly situated too I think¹⁷ there are mountains all around and St. Marys [Bitterroot] river to the north this is a pretty stream and there

is plenty of fish in it When we came here yesterday they [gave] us a room and I expected to find it some thing like living in but we went in and found it dirty as the ground and nothing to clean it with I asked for a broom and they showed me a bunch of willows

6th we have been working in a brickyard or what they call one here where they make adobes or Spanish bricks I have fixed a dam and a vat The weather is warm and the thermometer stands at summer heat

7th I have been making brick today and very nice work it is as we have to take the mud in our hands and put it in the moulds. weather warm a small shower about two o clock

8th I have been making brick or dobes as they call them here the weather warm and cloudy -

9th I have been mowing today weather cloudy but warm - there was a heavy frost this morning

10th I went out to mowing this morning but did not do much as I was sick about 11 o clock and done nothing all day weather warm and pleasant

11th I have laid abed all the morning and been very sick by spells Mr. Owen had five horses stolen last night by the black feet indians I suppost as

¹⁶ The distances and the meager description of the country indicate that they crossed into Montana by way of Lemhi Pass, rather than Monida Pass to the east or other passes to the west. Lemhi Pass was favored by traders who wintered their livestock in the Bitterroot and by the Indians. The first waters of the Missouri they would meet on this trail would be Bloody Dick Creek, but Dodson may have been referring to the larger Big Hole River.

¹⁷ Fort Owen is located on the east side of the Bitterroot River about a mile below Stevensville. Part of the buildings stand today. At the time Dodson was there, the post was far from completed. In the earliest known picture of the fort, drawn by Stanley, a topographer with Governor Isaac I. Stevens in 1853, it is depicted as an establishment of two or three central buildings surrounded by a square log stockade. Scattered on the flat and close to the fort are about sixteen log huts (*Rpt. Explor., etc., Ex. Doc. No. 78, Washington, D. C., 1855, Vol. XII, plate 30*). Following the architecture of posts to the south, Major Owen was constructing it with clay bricks, and by 1860 it was an imposing edifice with high adobe walls and massive bastions flanking the corners (*The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen, op. cit., pp. 8-9; M. A. Leeson, History of Montana, 1739-1885, Chicago, 1885, p. 884*).



they commit great depredations on the whites at this fort!¹⁸

12th Sunday I have done nothing only to sweep out our room and wash myself weather warm and clear -

13th I have been mowing to day. weather cloudy a small shower this evening -

14th I have been fixing ox yokes and hay rigging help to haul one load of hay weather fair -

15th The poor fellow was killed and scalped by the Blackfeet in sight of the Fort.¹⁹

[The last entry and the signature "Major Owen" is not in the handwriting of the Major.]

¹⁸ Concerning the depredations of the Blackfeet in the Bitterroot, Judge F. H. Woody stated: "The fort [Owen] was constructed of a stockade of logs placed in an upright position with one end planted in the ground. The stockade was necessary to protect the inmates and their property from the incursions of the numerous war parties of the Blackfeet Indians, that continued to make raids into the valley up to 1855. It was the custom to drive the horses inside of the stockade each night during the spring, summer and fall of each year, to prevent them from being stolen by the Blackfeet; even this precaution did not always save them. One night a party of Blackfeet came to the fort, and with knives and sticks dug up some of the logs forming the stockade, and drove away all of the horses belonging to the fort (F. H. Woody, *op. cit.*, p. 92).

¹⁹ The Fort Owen journals record these events in no more detail. They read:

Saturday [September] 11—Last Night Corall broken

Sunday 12 One Stolen horse recovered

Wednesday 15 Horses Stolen & Dodson Killed

Thursday 16 Buried poor Dodson

According to Duncan McDonald, Baptiste, a halfbreed was with Dodson at the time he was killed (*The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen*, *op. cit.*, p. 48).

The ledger kept at Fort Owen shows that on the day of his arrival at the post, Dodson purchased two buffalo robes for \$7 and a pound of chewing tobacco for \$1.50. A couple of days later he bought a buckskin, a compass, and some more tobacco. His short account is closed out with the abrupt notation "Killed by the Blackfeet Sept 15/52." (Fort Owen Account Book, original MS in possession of the author).

The incursions of Blackfeet raiding parties into valleys west of the Divide had a greater effect on delaying settlement in Western Montana than is generally conceded. By 1850 they had practically exterminated the peaceable Flatheads, and were one of the principle reasons which decided the Jesuits that the Bitterroot was no longer feasible for a mission. In the early summer of 1853, Major Owen was so discouraged by their brazen activities, that he in turn abandoned the valley. The death of John Dodson may well have been the determining incident for Owen's decision. When the western section of Isaac I. Steven's railroad survey party came up the Clark Fork River into Montana in 1853, they remarked on the deserted aspect of the country due to Blackfoot war parties. The arrival of this survey party with its military escort, however, gave new safety and expectations to Owen, and he returned to his post. Traders along the Emigrant Road commenced coming into the now relatively safe valleys of Western Montana to winter their stock and even to start farming (*Rpt. Explor., etc.*, Ex. Doc. No. 78, Washington, D. C., 1855, Vol. I, pp. 257 and 259; C. Schaeffer, "The First Jesuit Mission to the Flathead," *Pacific Northwest Quart.*, 1937, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 227-250; J. C. Ewers, "Gustavus Schon's Portraits of Flathead and Pend d'Oreille Indians, 1854," *Smithsonian Misc. Collections*, 1948, Vol. 110, No. 7, p. 20).



CALENDAR RECORDS



Figure 1. Pictographs drawn on a Blackfoot robe. The various groups of figures illustrate important military escapades in its owner's life. (Courtesy The Lookout, Flathead Lake, Montana.)

By Carling Malouf and Thain White

It is well known that the Indians in western North America once maintained biographical and historical records. Several such devices have been described in various ethnological, archaeological, and historical publications, and museums possess numerous examples of these. Nevertheless, the purpose and function of some types of these records in the lives of their makers remains a mystery. New data on a record still being maintained among the Kutenai Indians, in northwestern Montana, should remedy some of this deficiency in our knowledge of the function of these records.

Calendar records in western North America fall into three main categories. These are, first, the painting of pictographs on skins, wood, or rocks; second, marks incised on wood or stone; third, knots tied in strings as a reminder of significant events.

Of the three types of record-making, the pictograph is the best known to students of American Indians, especially those which have been painted on skins, tipis, or on a piece of canvas. Such record forms are common among the Indians in the Great Plains, such as the Blackfoot tribe. (See Fig. 1). Here the native historian, or autobiographer made notations of war exploits, trading expeditions, participation in councils, serious epidemics, religious experiences, and other key events. Such records are not calendrical, however, because they are discontinuous. That is, they do not attempt to cover an entire year's activity, but they portrayed what the recorder felt were some of the significant events in his life. Temporarily they extended over a few days at most, and concerned a few major episodes in that individual's life.

One form of pictographic art remains a mystery to anthropologists. Pictographs applied to stones, outcroppings, cliffs, or on the walls of caves are the least understood of all types of record making. Apparently the use of petroglyphs and pictographs in this form reached its florescence in the intermountain country sometime before white men entered North America, and their use had diminished in importance by historical times. It is possible that they may represent an ancient cult movement which, like the great Ghost and Prophet Dances of the 19th century, appeared at different times in different places throughout the west. Indians in recent times have been unable to give a satisfactory explanation of their meaning, so they still present a baffling archaeological problem. Like their counterparts on skins, they seem to be discontinuous—dealing only with events in an individual's life. Many of the more realistic forms portray animals or are conventionalized men. Less emphasis was on warfare in the intermountain pictographs, and greater importance seems to have been placed on such subjects as hunting.

Between Nevada and western Montana many panels of pictographs are linear in form with highly conventionalized men portrayed. They are, of course, impossible to interpret. A Kutenai informant, Baptise Mathias, has remarked, however, that young men went to places where pictographs were drawn in order to receive their medicine, or *mana*. Here they too added their name, in pictographic form, to the panel and by means of short lines or circles recorded the number of



Figure 2. Pictographs from a cave along the lake-shore, near Rollins, Montana.

days they had lain in that spot seeking a visitation from the spirits. The Shoshoni in Nevada and Utah gave a similar explanation for the use of pictographs on cliffs and in caves.¹ (See Figure 2). It is interesting that not only are the art forms similar between western Montana and northwestern Nevada, the beliefs of the Indians regarding these pictographs are also similar. This suggests that sometime during the past there was a cultural connection, through diffusion, perhaps, between the people in these two areas.

Lines incised on wood or stone, or painted on boards, were also employed to record events. One of the finest examples of this type of history has been described by Ruth Underhill for the Papago.² The marks on this board are associated with events which are memorized, and related by the historian. Since its origin in 1839, three men unilineally have been its custodian. Like the skin pictographs in the Great Plains, however, the record is discontinuous and the symbols are merely reminders to the historian of occasional and significant events. A pestle-like stone found on the shore of Flathead Lake with linear designs incised on it bears a remarkable resemblance to the Papago calendar board, and it seems to have served a

Carling Malouf, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Montana, has done extensive research on Montana Indian tribes. Some of his writing has previously appeared in this magazine.

Thain White is an enthusiastic amateur archaeologist, anthropologist and historian who lives near Dayton, Montana. A sheep rancher and grower of Christmas trees, Mr. White has worked with Professor Malouf on various research projects

¹ Carling Malouf, "The Gosiute Shoshoni in Cultural Change," (Manuscript, 1952).

² Ruth Underhill, *A Papago Calendar Record* (University of New Mexico Bulletin, Anthropological Series, II, No. 5. Albuquerque, 1938).

similar purpose. It was found at an early, but post-Caucasian site at Bigfork, and had been broken. (See Figure 3A). Father De Smet mentioned a similar sort of record among the Kutenai.³ His account was as follows:

"Several showed me their journal, consisting of a square stick on which they had notched the number of days and weeks elapsed since I abode with them in the neighborhood of the Great Lake Tet Platte [Flathead Lake]. They Had computed a forty-one months and some days."⁴

String records were probably used throughout most portions of the west between northern Mexico, and through California, into Washington, Montana, and Canada. Among the Havasupai, in Grand Canyon, Arizona, for example, the "knotted string record is a formal accompaniment of an invitation to a gathering; one knot is cut off or untied for each that elapses until the event."⁵ They had a similar use in other parts of the Southwest as well as in California. In the Northwest, particularly among the Salish speaking people and some of their neighbors, string records were used for a different purpose. In this region they were still mnemonic in nature, but instead of being used to mark days until an event was to be held they indicated days and events which had already transpired, and were mostly biographical.

Daily a knot was tied in a string. (See Figure 3B.) When an unusual event occurred, such as a birth, a death of a friend or relative, or some special historical event, it was indicated by adding a colored object, string, hair, bark, or a bow to the string calendar. Typically, the Lower Columbia River Indians, except those around Puget Sound, maintained their records on a continuous string which was usually rolled into a ball.⁶ One such string reported by Harrington was 35 feet long.⁷ Another had 1,577 knots in it.⁸ Among the Indians in the Upper Columbia River system, however,

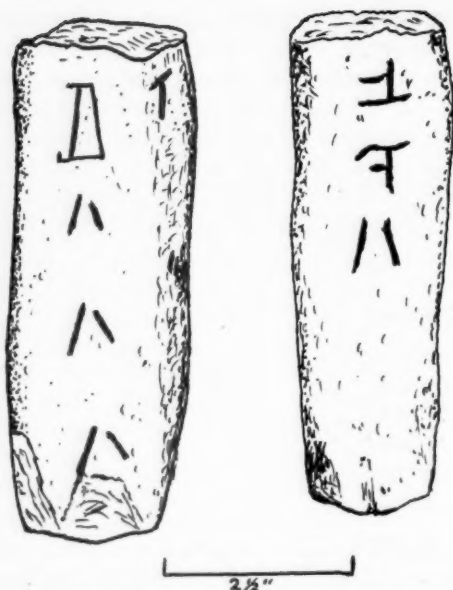


Figure 3A. Archaeological Specimen from Flathead Lake, Montana. This probably is an ancient type of calendar record.

they were tied in bundles. Such strings were maintained on a monthly basis, and then were tied together in a bundle for the year.

A Yakima specimen reported by Leechman consisted of a string of knots with a special marker every 28 knots or so, suggesting it was based on a lunar month.⁹ Another had 29 knots for 15 "moons," at least. Harrington noted that the spacing varied between 24 and 32 days.¹⁰ This irregularity probably reflects

³ Hiram M. Chittenden and Alfred T. Richardson, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, S. J. 1801-1873* (New York: Harper, 1905), II, 493-4.

⁴ In the museum, Montana State University, Missoula, there is a notched stick record made by Agnes Finley.

⁵ Leslie Spier, "Havasupai Ethnography," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, XXIX (New York, 1928), Part III, 172.

⁶ The *Quipu* string records from Peru were based on a decimal system, and were not chronological. They consisted of a minstring with subsidiary lines attached.

⁷ J. D. Leechman and M. R. Harrington, *String Records of the Northwest* (Heye Foundation, Indian Notes and Monographs, No. 16. New York, 1921), 62.

⁸ *Idem*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 62. We cannot agree with him, however, when he suggests that this might be a record of menses.

the native confusion on the length of the year. Said Prof. Harry Turney-High regarding the Kutenai:¹¹

"The Kutenai kept count of the passage of the year by the moon, important not only for its economic connotation but for ceremonial life . . . Their greatest concern was to find midwinter in order to begin their new year. Each man who would take the trouble provided himself with a length of rawhide rope. When the band agreed that a new year had begun, he would tie a knot in his string and a new knot at each moon. In this way he kept account of the 'months' and hence of the seasons."

Monthly records were also divided into weeks. There was a tendency for most of their string records to have six knots, then a marker of some sort. Leechman¹² and Harrington¹³ believe that this seven-day week is an innovation which was introduced after Europeans entered the area, but the months, being based on the phases of the moon, were native.

Reports on the use of the records have been only general in nature. Harrington said they were mostly made by women.¹⁴ A mother, for example, would start at the birth of her child, and would mark the unusual events in its life by attaching a bead, a piece of bark, a knot, or some other item.¹⁵

At Elmo, Montana, there is living a Kutenai, age 73, who still maintains a record which had its origin from a mnemonic string. The record was previously kept by the father of the present historian. In those days it was maintained as a series of knots tied in a buckstring. A knot was tied every day about one inch apart along the string as a record of that day. One of the first things a man who owned such a string would do in the morning, after he got up, would be to remove it from his waist, where it was kept fastened to the top of his leggings, and tie a knot in it to represent that day. Six knots were said to repre-



Figure 3B. Kutenai Buckstring record for one week.

sent Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. For Sunday a separate piece was tied, in the form of a bow, to represent the Sabbath. Such bows were painted red, the pigment usually being obtained from a valley to the west of Flathead Lake, now called Hog Heaven. Other significant events recorded along the string were births, deaths, and an occasional historical event. Every time a birth or death occurred among the historian's friends or relatives another bow was added to that particular day. Black strings represented a death while yellow denoted a birth. The black pigment came from the Jocko Valley, to the south of Flathead Lake, while yellow was obtained from a stream near Libby, Montana, to the northwest. In this case thirty-one knots represented a month, and at the end of the year a new string was started.

It was from such a string as this that Baptiste Mathias obtained a family history. The account does not extend back beyond his father's generation. He refers to this method of recording information as "writing." He is, of course, illiterate, and speaks very little English.

After Baptiste had acquired his father's buckstring record and had memorized some of the events it contained, he sought, and obtained an ordinary notebook, a labor-time book, and the events were transferred to this new media. This occurred sometime around 1900. Dots were made to represent years. The record was no longer kept daily as such, but he continued to mark an ordinary

¹¹ H. H. Turney-High, *Ethnography of the Kutenai* (Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, No. 56. Menasha, Wisconsin, 1941), 96.

¹² Leechman and Harrington, *String Records*, 13-14.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

white man's calendar in lieu of the daily knots. Tangent lines with smaller dots attached represent births. The number of crosses vary from one figure to the other, but this does not necessarily indicate the number of persons who had died that year.

In reviewing the record it may be noticed that Baptiste's father evinced a little more interest in historical events than did his son, who concentrated primarily on births and deaths of close relatives and friends. Perhaps, as Leslie Spier has suggested,¹⁶ this shift in emphasis may reflect Christian practices. Such a record of births and deaths bears resemblances to the old family Bible, or perhaps, to parish registers. Since all of the Columbia Plateau Indians have been strongly affected by Christianity this possibility cannot be overlooked.

As mentioned before, on the new calendar a dot was made to represent an entire year. They were arranged in six vertical rows of 20 dots each, with a seventh row of six dots. A line is drawn across the page to separate the dots into lines of ten. It is "read" from bottom-up, and from left to right. Dots without attachments of any kind represent uneventful years in which no history, births or deaths were noted. The entire record was made with a pencil. (See Figure 3C.)

The notebook is about 6 inches long by 4½ inches wide, and is bound with boards, hinged with two leather straps. The entire history of 126 years is marked on a single page, covering an area of 3 inches by 5 inches. Only 23 of the 126 years were considered eventful enough to cause it to be remembered. In the figure reproducing the calendar numbers have been added for easier identification and description. The significant years are as follows:

1. Baptiste Mathias's father was born in 1826. He was 28 years old when the Treaty with Governor Stevens was signed near Missoula, Montana, in 1855.
2. The year Frank Eagle (the Indians called him Shaking Eagle) was born. He was a close friend of Baptiste's father. This was in 1827.
3. Big Knife, or Aeneas, born in 1828. He died in 1900 during the second smallpox epidemic, although not from the disease (Item 75). He was a brother to Baptiste's father and was an important leader, or

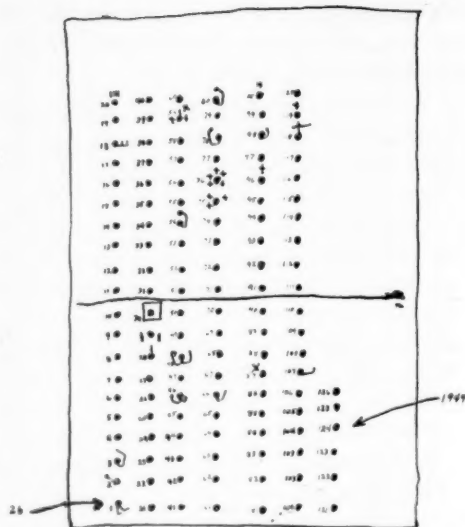


Figure 3C. Calendar Record maintained by Baptiste Mathias.

- "chief." He was followed by Kustata, another relative.
18. Entrance of two white men in 1845. Described as "Frenchmen," they built a cabin on Ashley Creek, near Somers, on Flathead Lake. The Indians refer to Frenchmen as "Longwhiskers." After one year the whites left Kutenai country.
20. Two years later, 1847, four more "Frenchmen" came and settled at the lake.
29. Missionaries arrived among the Kutenai in 1854, presumably from St. Ignatius.
30. Treaty of 1855 signed with Governor Stevens at Missoula, Montana. The informant, Baptiste Mathias, said at the time there was a large gathering of Kutenai at Evaro, near the scene of the meeting. "Lots of people there," he reiterated.
46. Father's second wife died, 1871. Remarked the recorder, "Each of the people that are dead, and each that is living or born have to be recorded."
48. Josephine Martin born, 1873. In 1952 she was still living.
54. Baptiste Mathias, the historian and chief of the Kutenai Sun Dance born, 1879.
59. First major smallpox epidemic among the Flathead Lake Kutenai, 1884. Baptiste Mathias did not contract the disease.
66. Person unknown. "Can't remember. He was around this place. Anyhow, it is someone's age. It has to be 'written' down."
75. Chief Aeneas Paul, or Big Knife died during the second major smallpox epidemic, but not of this disease. (It was referred to as, "The Itch.") This was during the year 1900.
76. Second smallpox epidemic at its height. The Kutenai village just west of Dayton, Montana, was burned down in an attempt to gain control of the disease. The site where the Flathead Lake Kutenai now hold their annual Sun Dance is in the clearing where once existed a part of their village.
78. A son, Mose Mathias, born in 1903.
80. A son, Richard Mathias was born.
87. Aeneas Mathias born, but died at age 11. His death was not recorded, unless, for some reason, the recorder and informant was withholding information. Possibly item 96 or 100 could be his death.
96. A death, but the recorder doesn't remember the name of the individual.
98. Paul Mathias born, 1922.
100. A death, but the recorder could not remember the name. 1924.
107. A birth, but the historian could not recall the name. He noted that they would be 20 years old in 1952.
118. Baptiste Mathias's wife died in 1942. (Note the attached cross is a little larger than the others.)
119. Wife of a close friend, "Old man Jocko," died in 1943.
126. 1951 last year recorded in the history.

¹⁶ Leslie Spier, Personal communication, February 1, 1951.

The adjacent Flathead Indians, too, are known to have kept records with strings and sticks. Also, some individuals yearly cut notches on some tool frequently used by them. Like the Kutenai, some of these people later transferred records from a string to paper. Eneas Granjo recalled that his mother, like Baptiste Mathias, kept a daily record, by "moons," and by the year in a notebook. In pencil she used to make her entries by marking six crosses for six days, then she left a blank space for Sunday. She also noted deaths, births, and other data, but the informant could not remember what symbols she used for this purpose. "People would ask her when different relatives died, then she would look in the book and tell them," was the purpose given by the informant.

Even today some young Kutenai feel it necessary for them to keep individual information, such as births and deaths in books. Said Mose Mathias, "When I hear someone died or was born I put them in a book, even if I don't know them, because when sometimes they get in trouble I can show the people what they are."

It is clear, thus, that Kutenai records are for the purpose of noting births and deaths of close friends and relatives in order to settle possible disputes, establish kinship, or for other purposes. In earlier records historical data of a tribal nature was also deemed important enough to remember, but in more recent times the tendency has been to emphasize personal data. If literate, modern recorders might even assume the task of noting data which does not even pertain to their own immediate relatives and friends.

"All issues of the Montana Magazine of History are well worth preserving, but the January issue is superlative. There isn't a stodgy line in it. I'll be thirsting for more of the same."

Dan Whetsone, Cut Bank, Montana.

"May I congratulate you? You have certainly come a long way since the first number. This is one of the most interesting of the Western magazines published."

Edward Morrill Book Co., Boston, Mass.

SPRING, 1953

DEADLY VERSE?

Brackett Stewart murdered O. H. Morgan and Mrs. Annie Armstrong, June 29, 1881 at the Morgan ranch near Old Agency. In the *Fort Benton Record* of August 4, 1881, appears this story and verse.

A Significant Epitaph

Judging from the following few lines painted on a board and nailed on the tree where Stewart was later hung, the citizens of Old Agency give fair warning to all evil disposed persons to give that portion of Chouteau a wide berth. Skulls and cross-bones adorned the notice which runs as follows:

WARNING

To all murderers, thieves, and would be desperadoes:

Beneath the sod, just under this tree,
Lies the carcass of Stewart, Brackett E.
Who gave up Christianity to become a
beast,

And was hung to the lower limb that
points to the east.

He was elevated by the boys on July the
first,

For deed unrivalled, by the bloodiest and
worst,

Murder, arson, rape and robbing,

Were the crimes that subjected this fiend
to snobbing;

And if there's any more of his clique
around this valley,

Who don't wish to meet him in death's
dark alley,

They'd better take a hint that's meant
for the best,

And go farther east, or else farther west.
For they're not fit brutes on earth to
dwell,

And if they stay around here, we'll soon
land them in Hell.

(Signed)

Old Agency Hemp Adjusters Association.



Range Day Tales

Recounted by Warren R. Woodson

Drawings by Jim Masterson

Old timers hereabouts well remember "Old Tex" with his fourteen-horse-team wagons, who freighted goods and supplies from Miles City to Jordan and to Northside ranches. Tex drove with a jerk line, and often at least half of his horses were raw broncs. Behind the three big wagons, Tex hauled a two-wheeler as cook shack and living quarters. One winter he started for Percy Williams' sheep ranch on the breaks of the Missouri River with fourteen thousand pounds of shelled feed corn. There were no graded roads, and no bridges across creeks and coulees. So after a bad storm every crossing was level-full of snow, and it was a case of having to shovel across. It took about fifty days to complete the trip to the Williamson ranch, and by that time most of the corn had been fed to the freight horses.

Tex did not hold snow water in much esteem after that. "It might be necessary for waterin' horses and makin' coffee, but beyond that d . . . snow water has no use, not even on Sat'day night," Tex claimed.

* * *

Warren R. Woodson, an old-timer of Central and Eastern Montana, now lives at Miles City. He is the son of John A. Woodson, who came to Virginia City by ox-team in 1864, later located in Confederate Gulch, was an early Sheriff of Meagher County, and a sheep rancher. James Masterson has done illustrating and cartooning for Montana newspapers and other publications for many years. He resides at Miles City.

STORM KIDS

One of the land marks on the north side of old Miles Town, was known as "The Dirty Woman's Ranch," located on the head of Dry House Creek. Having a brood of hungry children, she made her living by running a road ranch. But it was a case of real necessity that forced the traveler to come back a second time. It was generally believed she made her underwear and the kids' out of old bran sacks. When they walked, the listener did not hear the pleasant sound of rubbing silk. Rather, it was more like sand-bing silk. The well that supplied household water was barely adequate, supplying enough for coffee and for washing dishes once a week, but none for such frivolities as bathing. But once, after a series of drouth years, a sudden cloudburst came to the rescue. So, very quickly "The Dirty Woman" peeled the clothes off her kids and shoved them out into the cloudburst. Needless to say, when the children were once more admitted to the house, they looked and smelled better.

* * *



BEAN BUTCHER

"Old Man" Butcher, an Englishman, ran the Stone Shack Road ranch, some twenty miles north of Miles City on the old Jordan Road. Before he settled down there, Rancher Stacey once hired "Butch" to cook for the beef-roundup wagon on the north side of the Yellowstone. Now, Mr. Stacey was a tight man with a dollar. If he furnished his riders with spuds, flour for sour-dough bisquits, a little bacon grease for gravy, coffee, and all the beef they could eat, he regarded as sheer extravagance such luxuries as dried fruit pies or sauce. But Butch took considerable pride in his cooking, and he liked to feed the boys pie at least once a day. So, he sandwiched purchases of dried peaches, prunes and apples between flour and beans, hopeful that the boss would not notice such deception. When the grub wagon left Miles City, Butch had stocked plenty of forbidden dried fruit at about eight cents a pound, and sugar, at a nickel a pound. After the roundup was through for the season, Stacey looked over the bills. He was astounded at the quantity of beans which Butch had bought.

"Do you mean to tell me, Butch," he inquired, "that those boys ate a ton of beans on an eight weeks trip?" "Yes, sir," replied Butch, "them boys et every damn bean; they was the best bean eaters I ever seen." Butch had dumped a half ton of beans on vast expanses of prairie.

Real collector's items are the first news sheet printed in Virginia City by Wilbur Sanders in January, 1864; and the *News Letter*, which appeared at Bannack in March or April of that year. Information relating to either of the newspapers is eagerly sought.

Glitter: The first white baby born in Confederate Gulch (1866) was named "Diamond" after the area's metropolis, Diamond City.

SPRING, 1953



PRAIRIE PERFUME

One summer Homer Reed, working for Tex, was driving another string-horse outfit. Homer usually got the breakfast; and on this particular morning his nose was offended by the odor of Tex's socks near his bed, which a night of fresh air had not helped at all. So, he reached for the socks and put them on the camp fire. A few minutes later, when Tex started dressing he became indignant at the fate of his beloved footwear. Then he got a new pair out of his war bag. One day's wear in filthy boots reduced the new socks to as putrid a condition as the first. The next morning the second pair suffered the same fate as the first. Moreover, Reed took the precaution to boil a five gallon can of water, and fill the boots brimming to the top. This looked like a *casus belli*. But Tex had to give in and consent to washing his feet rather than lose the services of Reed, for he well knew that he could not drive two string-horse outfits alone.

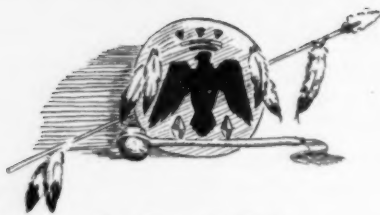
Oddity: The *Lewiston Radiator* (1865) was Helena's first newspaper.

Opportunity: On a cold winter day in 1896, the White Sulphur Bachelor's Club got all steamed up over a social event. They staged an invitation banquet for eligible young ladies.

A fighting Copper Camp journal of the roaring 90's was named *Vociferator*.

Cordage

Of The Early



Northwest Indians

By Jessie L. Duboc

Much of life in the modern world is profoundly influenced by the great inventions of primitive man: fire, the wheel, the wedge or axe, to mention only a few. Civilized man had been diligent in perfecting these important discoveries of his ancestors. He has also been interested in finding out how and when these great inventions came to be and what difference they made in the pattern of living.

Cordage is one of these basic inventions. Anthropologists maintain that the caveman probably used thread, thong and rope of a kind, long before he learned to control fire or use the principle of the wheel. The jolly tar on his sailing vessel has been credited with the invention of the intricate knots and hitches so useful in modern times. Apparently, however, uncivilized man knew and used almost all of these knots. Civilized man has improved upon the quality and appearance of rope and thread, but he did not invent them, and he has added only two new materials: metal and nylon.¹

When white men arrived in the Northwest region, which now consists of Idaho, Washington and Oregon, they found cordage a vital necessity in every Indian household and the natives skilled in its manufacture. Hanks of rope and thread, strong and long-lasting, were kept on hand at all times. Stored away, close at hand, were materials of various kinds from which additional cordage could be made as required.²

Cordage materials were provided by both plants and animals. On the Great

Plains, home of the buffalo and other large game animals, meat was the chief article of diet, but the animals also provided valued cordage. Bone, hair, horn, quills, sinew, and tallow were important. Much cordage was made from rawhide, with sinew thread used in the finer sewing.

In contrast, in the Columbia Intermountain Region, lying between the Rockies and the Cascades, typical cordage came from plant or vegetable products. This was a land of small game animals for the most part, hence the food was largely vegetable, supplemented by fish. Lacking the larger animals to furnish hide and sinew, plants furnished the cord for such necessities as watertight cooking vessels, fish lines and nets, baby cradles, a number of articles of clothing, the lacing for the warrior's wooden armor, the lashings for the mat-covers of dwellings, leashes for dogs, and all the equipment needed for horses.³

While the natives of the various areas depended for the most part upon the natural resources of the region where they lived for cordage supplies, they also secured some materials through trade. The Northwest Indians of the Plains, the Intermountain and the Coastal regions carried on an extensive trade with

¹ Otis T. Mason, *The Origins of Invention*, (New York, 1910), 58; Andrew Hamilton, "The Story of Rope," *Popular Mechanics Magazine*, XC (July, 1948), 137, 139.

² Verne F. Ray, "The Sanpoil and Nespelen, Salishan Peoples of Northeastern Washington," *University of Washington Publications in Anthropology*, V (Seattle, 1932), 44.

³ Walter Cline and others, *The Sinkaietk or Southern Okanagon of Washington* (General Series in Anthropology, No. 6; Banta, 1936), 19-20; Harry H. Turney-High, *The Flathead Indians of Montana* ("Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, No. 48;" Menasha, Wis., 1937), 97, 110.

Jessie L. Duboc lives at Fromberg, Montana. A meticulous researcher, she has long been interested in the cultural and historical heritage of the State. She is a life-time member of the M. I. A. and Montana Historical Society.

each other in the United States and Canadian areas.⁴ Such centers as The Dalles and Kettle Falls were busy Indian cities at the height of the trading season. The Wishram, for instance, settled permanently around The Dalles, and made most of their living by acting as middlemen in trading operations.⁵

The tools employed in harvesting cordage materials and in making rope and thread were an important part of cordage making. They varied according to the conditions of the area, such as the nature of the soil and the kind of plants and animals to be found. These home-made tools were of the simplest character, but they were indispensable. Abrasives, awls, digging-sticks, knives, needles, pins and scrapers—each had its important duty. Bone flint, horn, sticks, stone and thorns supplied most of the implements. Primitive methods persisted until recent times.

The one tool that was never absent in the primitive industry, no matter what materials was to be sewed, was the awl or stiletto.⁶ No sewing could be done until holes had been punched. The awl was also essential for other purposes, such as the splitting of roots to be used for thread.

The first awls may have been of bone or horn, but white men saw flint awls, too, which were used in basketry by some tribes.⁷ Awls of deer ribs, five or six inches in length with handles of buckskin wrapping, or of wood, were found among the Southern Okanagon, while others of that tribe preferred bearbones, which were slender, naturally pointed and tougher.⁸ The Sanpoil worked with wooden awls.⁹ In making water-tight cooking baskets of cedar roots, Nez Perce women employed awls in the place of needles, punching openings as small as possible and then pushing the thread through them with the awls. Thorns of cactus were sometimes gathered for use in punching holes.¹⁰

The true needle was developed by the women of many tribes. It was constructed out of bone, or of some hard wood

such as ironwood, dogwood, oak or syringa. It had an oblong or roundish eye and a sharp point. The length varied from three to twelve inches, and some of the needles were curved. The bones from the leg of a deer or the small bones from a bear's foot or ankle were heated to fracture them. Then the fragments were smoothed and sharpened with grit stone.

Quills were occasionally used in stitching birch-bark baskets or other sewing, after holes had been punched. Wooden pins held pieces of bark, in the making of a bark basket, or fastened the ends of a temporary mat raincoat. Long thorns or the spines of the hawthorn also served as pins.

The knife was an essential tool in cordage making. It was usually made of beaver teeth, bone, flint or stone. Knives were of various shapes and sizes, their blades varying in length from four to fifteen inches. Handles were of wood or antler. Pitch, the gum of chokecherry, or sturgeon-blood glue held the handle to the blade.¹¹ Flint for knives was flaked with bone of deer or elk. The Kutenai claimed that work in flint was

⁴ James A. Teit, "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus," *Forty-Fifth Annual Report of the U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1927-1928, (Washington, 1930), 250-251; "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, II (New York, 1900), 258-259.

⁵ Ray, *op. cit.*, 115; Leslie Spier and Edward Sapir, "Wishram Ethnography," *University of Washington Publications in Anthropology*, III (Seattle, 1930), 224-225; James A. Teit, "The Middle Columbia Salish," *University of Washington Publications in Anthropology*, II (Seattle, 1928), 121-122; Harry H. Turney-High, *Ethnography of the Kutenai* ("Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association No. 56;" Menasha, Wis., 1941), 86-87.

⁶ Clark Wissler, *North American Indians of the Plains* ("Publication of the Anthropological Handbook Fund, Series No. 1;" American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1934), 80.

⁷ Spier and Sapir, *op. cit.*, 188.

⁸ Cline, *op. cit.*, 15.

⁹ Ray, *op. cit.*, 35.

¹⁰ Ruth Underhill, *The Northern Paiute Indians of California and Nevada* ("Sherman Pamphlets, No. 1, Publication of Education Division of U. S. Office of Indian Affairs;" n.d.), 30.

¹¹ Herbert J. Spinden, "The Nez Perce Indians," *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, II, Pt. 3 (Lancaster, Pa., 1908), 184.

the oldest of their tribal industries.¹² In the making of cordage, the knife was used for cutting and peeling the bark of trees and roots, as well as for skinning, and other processes in obtaining rawhide thongs. It frequently served as a substitute for a scraper or other tools.

The digging-stick, a primitive spade, was one of the most useful tools for harvesting roots of plants for food and cordage, as well as for many other uses. Women of all of Northwest tribes were highly proficient in spade-making and use.

Abrasives also were important in fabricating cordage. Roots were peeled and scraped with a sharp stone. Bone, antler and wood were smoother and polished with files of fine-grained stone. Small flaked, notched stones furnished rasps and planers for smoothing rawhide thongs. The stiff spiked stems of horsetail (*Equisetum*, sp.), often called "scouring rush," were also used for sharpening and polishing bone and horn.

A sewing kit was an important part of a woman's equipment on journeys. The awl, sinew for thread, a knife, and sometimes needles were among the articles carried in a bag made of rawhide or dressed skin, and frequently decorated with beads. This pouch, which might also serve as a fire-bag for flint-and-steel dangled from her strong belt or was hung where it could easily be reached with the hand. Larger bags held skin-dressing tools. The indispensable awl frequently had a special decorated case of its own. Warriors, too, carried a fire-bag in which at least a knife and awl were to be found.¹³

Animal products furnished the toughest, most pliable and longest-lasting cordage materials. Fine sewing was done with sinew thread, taken preferably from a deer, although it was also secured from elk, buffalo, or mountain sheep. Broad bands of it, dried for storage, were kept on hand at all times. Sinew thread had infinite use where maximum toughness and pliability were demanded.¹⁴

To obtain sinew, an Indian woman first took a piece of tendon in hand and from it pulled out a desired number of shreds. If she wished it to be as fine as silk thread, she continued the process until the smallest possible shreds were obtained. To make heavy thread, the fine shreds had to be re-twisted. They were placed in the mouth to soften. This moistening enabled one to twist the thread tightly and use it while damp. When dried, it shrank, thus tightening the stitches.

Hide thongs were used for coarser sewing, such as that needed for a bullboat or a leather tipi cover. Indians early discovered the marvelous substance that rawhide is. "Frost that will snap steel nails like glass has no effect upon it. When it is put on green (e.g., to hold together parts of implements) and allowed to dry, it shrinks nearly one-half, binding parts immovable."¹⁵

No one can calculate the millions of strips of hide that the Indians had cut and utilized before white men arrived. Hide provided them with string lariats, halters, stake ropes, and whips; ropes for towing boats or dragging huge and heavy bundles; handles for a carrying basket that held several bushels; materials for a tump line that enabled a man or woman to carry immense burdens on the back; and thongs for snowshoes, or for lashing the rods of wooden armor of a warrior.

The process of making hide rope by the Upper Kutenai was similar to that used by other Northwest tribes: "To make hide rope, one first cut inch-wide strips from sound skins. These were then soaked in water to make them flex-

¹² Turney-High, *Ethnography of the Kutenai*, op. cit., 87-88. Has details of flint mining near Missoula and Fernie, Canada, and knife making processes; see also Cline, Ray, Spier and Spier, Teit, and Wissler.

¹³ Ray, op. cit., 44; Clark Wissler, "The Material Culture of the Blackfoot Indians," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, V, Pt. 1 (New York, 1910), 74.

¹⁴ Mason, op. cit., 42. See also Cline, op. cit., 54; Spier and Spier, op. cit., Wissler, "The Material Culture of the Blackfoot," op. cit., 53.

¹⁵ Mason, op. cit., 41-42. Most of the authors already cited refer to one or more uses of hide.

ible and facilitate scraping-off the hair. A single day's soaking was adequate for a fresh hide, while a dried one took at least two days. This done, one end of the strip was tied to a tree and pulled and stretched time and again. This stretching could not be done too often. When the tension was released after stretching, the hide strip twined itself, its flatness disappeared, and it became rope. The rope was then kept in the shade so that it could dry very slowly."

"A mixture was next made by boiling tallow and the root of the wild rhubarb together. The dried rope was immersed in this mixture, taken out and dried again. It was next pounded with heavy clubs until soft. When softened in this manner it never became hard again. Finally the rope was carefully rubbed with fat, preferably black bear's grease, and was then ready for use. Such a rope would hold anything. Abraham Bull Robe maintains that he has seen a fretting horse saw through a tree with such a rope, without the tether breaking or chafing through."¹⁶

Animal hair was sometimes plaited into rope. In prehorse days, bison hair was the favorite material, especially during the post-winter season when the buffalo had long, full coats. Hair of mountain goat and mountain sheep wool was also utilized for this purpose. After horses were common, rope was more frequently made from horse-hair.

Where animal products were scarce or less adaptable, plant or vegetal cordage materials were used. The Indians west of the Rockies, largely dependent as they were upon vegetal resources, became expert in their understanding of the characteristics of plants and trees, of their bark, fibres, roots and withes, the uses that could be made of them, the seasons to obtain them, and the tools essential for each process. Without doubt, aboriginal knowledge of flora and fauna far excelled that of the majority of present day Americans. This knowledge was not scientific in the modern sense, but it was

extensive; and sufficient to enable the Indians to possess the necessities of life.

Indian women would travel many miles from home, often climbing mountains, to secure the particular type of product sought for weaving, sewing or decorative purposes. Here they would dig up tenacious roots using only an ordinary digging-stick; or they would cut off branches, and peel bark from trees. They would then trudge home, bending under the heavy loads of roots, twigs, leaves or grasses. After the labor of gathering and transporting was over, they would begin to prepare the materials. These arduous tasks, together with the construction of the article to be made, frequently consumed many months.¹⁷

Much of this preliminary work occurred in the summertime, when "the twigs and grasses are flexible, the barks are easily peeled and are rich in juices."¹⁸ The season varied, however, according to such factors as the color desired, the degree of toughness needed, and the condition of the sap. The Kutenai gathered the fine cedar roots in the spring, "when the great roots send out webs of fine feelers."¹⁹

Split roots furnished a large share of this vegetal cordage. Roots were used, especially in the weaving or coiling of the various basketry articles such as basketry hats, berry containers, blankets, drinking cups, fish nets, mats, and watertight containing and cooking vessels. Bark canoes were sewed with roots, as were also bark baskets and bags. The widespread use of the word "watape" (also spelled wattape, wattup, watap) in the Indian languages is an indication of the extensive use of roots. This important Canadian French term of Algonquin origin designated the stringy roots of the conifers, used principally for sewing birch bark canoes.²⁰

¹⁶ Turney-High, *Ethnography of the Kutenai*, op. cit., 75.

¹⁷ George W. James, *Indian Basketry* (2d ed.; Los Angeles, 1902), 56.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁹ Turney-High, *Ethnography of the Kutenai*, op. cit., 76-77. His informant was "Old Mary."

²⁰ Catherine M. White.

For the best of cooking baskets, the fine rootlets of the cedar family, especially the arborvitae (*Thuja gigantea*) were the ones most desired. Such baskets "would last ten years. Hill Tout states that a well-made cedar root basket often outlasts the generation which first saw it; some specimens are known to have been in use close upon half a century."²¹ The largest of such baskets were three feet tall and had two handles.²² When cedar was not available, the roots of other trees were used, such as birch, pine, spruce and willow.

After the roots had been cleaned, the next step was to split them; a process in which the Indians were highly skilled. The size of the root cord varied, thus providing a convenient series of sizes for various uses. The larger portion of a woven piece, such as a basket, was made of uniform sized cords, however. The Sanpoil used "strips of root . . . as thick as practicable and two or three-sixteenths of an inch wide." They were "kept moist while working with them, to increase their flexibility."²³

If the roots were not needed immediately, they were "buried in the ground to keep them fresh. When required, they were then hung up until dry enough to use."²⁴ In localities lacking suitable trees, resourceful squaws collected driftwood for basketry. "The Sanpoil claim that good basketry material was scarce in their country, and they depended on the collecting of the rootlets of uprooted cedar, spruce, and juniper brought down the Columbia by the freshets, and which happened to strand on the shores of the river within their country."²⁵

When roots could not be obtained, the women gathered material from any plant that would yield tough fibre. Among these plants were Indian hemp (dogbane) milkweed, nettle, sagebrush, silverberry, willow, and even ferns. Of these, the principal source was the dogbane (*Apocynum*, sp.). Its common name, Indian hemp, suggests the extensive use of its fibre. The hemp, or the

rope made from it, was one of the essential articles of barter in many Indian trading centers. Popularity of Indian hemp may be accounted for by the fact that its long tough fibre is soft and exceedingly strong, after it has been properly treated, and that the plant was widely available, since it thrives from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Canada to Mexico.²⁶

Hemp was gathered at various times of the year, depending upon its location, and any special characteristics desired. That part of the supply which was not immediately needed was cured in the sun, tied into large bundles and stored.²⁷ The first step in preparing hemp, as with all other fibre-plants, was to soak the stems in water. The bark covering soon rotted and was readily removed, leaving the fibre exposed. The two most common methods of making twine were braiding the fibres and rolling, or twisting them.²⁸

Sagebrush rope and string was used for lashings, such as the tying of vegetal mat covers of dwellings, tying the magic bundle in the hunt, holding the rods of animal traps, twining bags and baskets, or lacing moccasins and garments.²⁹ At one time, sagebrush (*Artemisia* sp.) was the "year-round material for clothing" among the tribes on the Intermontane plateau.³⁰

In areas where the silverberry (*Elaeagnus argentea*) was plentiful, this plant furnished fibre for cordage. The Kutenai

²¹ Cline, *op. cit.*, 62.

²² Turney-High, *Ethnography of the Kutenai*, *op. cit.*, 77.

²³ Ray, *op. cit.*, 35.

²⁴ Teit, "Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *op. cit.*, 187.

²⁵ Teit, "Salishan Tribes," *op. cit.*, 223.

²⁶ Charles F. McBride, *Useful Wild Plants in United States and Canada* (McBride, 1920), 212.

²⁷ Ray, *op. cit.*, 36.

²⁸ Ellsworth Jaeger, "Cordage from Nature," *Nature Magazine*, XLIII (April, 1950), 192. Additional interesting details are cited in Cline, *op. cit.*, 68; Saunders, *op. cit.*, 212; Teit, "Salishan Tribes," *op. cit.*, 51, 328; Turney-High, *Ethnography of the Kutenai*, *op. cit.*, 76-77; Underhill, *op. cit.*, 33.

²⁹ Cline, *op. cit.*, 43; Robert H. Lowie, "Notes on Shoshonean Ethnography," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, XX, Pt. 3 (New York, 1924), 178, 187-314; Ray, *op. cit.*, 36; Underhill, *op. cit.*, 17, 33.

³⁰ Cline, *op. cit.*, 43.

liked the oily bark, which, they said, remained soft and strong. Flathead Indians tied their cattail mats with cords of twisted silverberry. Blackfeet found the bark very tough and made strong rope for tying skins and parfleches, when rawhide was not at hand. Fish nets and clothing were among the articles in which this cordage was utilized.³¹

The Northwest should give special honors to the willow for the part it played in the history of the area. Every tribe in the Northwest, as well as the white men, utilized it. Many a life has been saved by the dense stands of willows that spread their branches over water-courses. There were more than a score of uses for its bark and branches. Deer were taken with a snare of willow bark rope. The leash of a hunting dog was often a willow withe. Willow baskets were sometimes decorated with the roots of the black fern (*Pteris* sp.).³² To furnish added strength, a hoop of a green willow twig was sewed to the top of an open basket and the edges of mats were twined with willow cord for the same purpose.

This presentation of the story of the cordage of the early Northwest Indians makes no attempt to contribute to the knowledge of the processes of the manufacture of modern rope and thread. It is simply a study of the amazing resourcefulness of a primitive people in adapting themselves to their environment in order to satisfy their needs. Many white travelers and settlers in the pioneer period borrowed numerous phases of his material culture from the Indian, including various forms of cordage, and found them satisfactory.

³¹ Walter McClintock, *The Old North Trail* (New York, 1910), 529; James A. Teit, "Ethnobotany of the Thompson Indians," *Forty-Fifth Annual Report of the U. S. Bureau of Ethnology*, (Washington, 1930), 495-500; Teit, "Salishan Tribes," *op. cit.*, 219; Teit, "Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *op. cit.*, 188; Turney-High, *Ethnography of the Kutenai*, *op. cit.*, 75; Turney-High, *Flathead Indians of Montana*, *op. cit.*, 102.

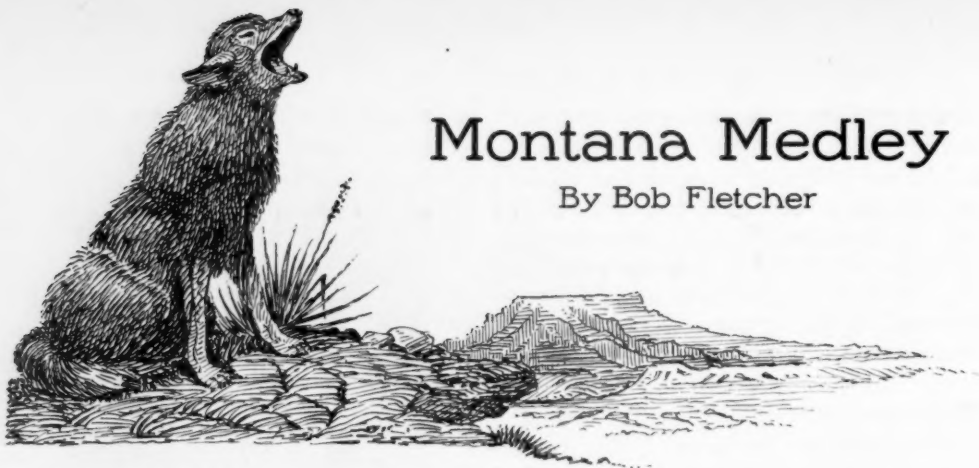
³² James, *op. cit.*, 83, 175; Lowie, "Notes on Shoshonean Ethnography," *op. cit.*, 228; Ray, *op. cit.*, 37; Spinden, *op. cit.*, 193-194; Underhill, *op. cit.*, 30, 64.



POOR DAY FOR HANGING

John W. Grannis arrived in Montana territory, June 1863, remaining in the territory until his death in 1887. This excerpt from his diary, now in the files of the Montana Historical Society Library, is dated January 14, 1864.

Cloudy & clear by Spells obeying a notice of the vigilance committee I went to Virginia this morning. (From Nevada City) the whole gulch turned out By 10 O'clock the town was surrounded by a guard and a Search was commenced for some parties Implicated in the Road Agency Business. After a search of 4 or 5 hours we had six prisoners. Some having escaped. of these six 5 were found guilty and taken to the gallows & hung until they were Dead. their names were—Jack Gallagher, Boon Helm, Frank Parrish, Hayes Lyon, and Club Footed George. I was on guard nearly all Day & saw them hung. the five was hung in a Row. All of them maintained their innocence to the Last & cursed the Vigilance Committee. The Bombers were very Quiet all Day. there were at least 500 men in town armed with Revolvers & Double Barrel Shot guns. the guard that was about the Prisoners was Released from Duty as soon as they were Dead & I came home after Dark a little while Being very well Satisfied with the Days work. Saw five men hung and not a very good Day for hanging either.



Montana Medley

By Bob Fletcher

SKY PILOTS

Early in the fur days of the upper Missouri, Iroquois Indians had been induced by traders to come West and teach the tribes of the Rockies the art of trapping beaver. Some of them affiliated with the Flatheads and Nez Perce. They had been taught Catholicism in the East, and told their new friends of this white man's religion. Impressed by the Iroquois accounts, the Salish were eager for further instruction.

Old Ignace La Mousse, leader of the Iroquois who had intermarried with the Flatheads, was not to be denied a Black Robe to bring unction to the souls of his adopted people. As early as 1831 he urged the sending of a delegation to St. Louis to petition for teachers and the white man's Book. Association with trappers had not been particularly uplifting for the Western Indians from either an ethical or a theological point of view. For a tribe to solicit missionaries voluntarily was extraordinary, as most Indians were well satisfied with an old time medicine man to guide their destinies and interpret their dreams. Religion without tangible trimmings didn't mean much to a blanket Indian.

On the first attempt four braves managed to reach St. Louis, presumably in the company of American Fur's Lucien Fontenelle. They weren't there long before two succumbed to the complexities of civilization. Two others, Rabbitskin-Leggins and No-Horns-on-his-Head, who were no doubt bewildered, frightened,

and disappointed, managed to get passage up the Missouri on the steamboat Yellowstone, only to fork off on a trail to the Happy Hunting Grounds before they could reach home and make a report that their mission had failed.

Late in the summer of 1835, Old Ignace decided to take matters in his own hands and went to St. Louis with his two adolescent sons. A trip of that distance was no light undertaking in those premotorized days. Old Ignace returned safely but the promises he had received didn't materialize. No zealous clergyman seemed to possess the requisite missionary fervor to swap the dubious comforts of the frontier settlements for a lonesome berth in unknown country over two thousand miles away in the wilderness. Civilization did have its minor advantages, though at that time the plumbing at both ends of the line was a stand-off.

In 1837 the persistent Flatheads sent a third embassy. But it was rubbed out by a band of Sioux along the South Platte. The final effort was made two years later by Left-handed Peter and Young Ignace, who volunteered for the assignment that had failed with monotonous regularity. They found thirty-eight-year-old Father DeSmet, a Jesuit priest of Belgian birth, who responded to their pleas with enthusiasm. Peter or Pierre of the left hand went home by himself to report success. Young Ignace and Father DeSmet joined a fur brigade leaving for Green River in the spring.

The jubilant Flatheads sent an advance reception committee of ten warriors to the rendezvous, while the entire tribe made preparations to follow. On the last day of June, 1840, Father DeSmet was welcomed by the chosen ten. On the following Sunday he celebrated Mass in the wilderness. The Indians were convinced that at last they had acquired a Black Robe whose talismans and amulets were strong. Father DeSmet was also convinced that here was a field for pious labor. He left the Indians near the three forks of the Missouri with a promise to return the following year. In St. Louis he won approval of his superiors and in the spring of 1841 started for the mountains again, this time accompanying a caravan of California-bound emigrants. He brought saddle horses, pack animals, four carts, and one wagon, with oxen to pull them, and thereby gained the distinction of bringing the first wheeled vehicles into present Montana.

He and his little band of priests and lay brothers left the emigrant trail at Fort Hall, Idaho, where they had been met by a contingent of Flatheads. This delegation escorted them through the Beaverhead and Deer Lodge Valleys and down that portion of the Clark Fork of the Columbia which DeSmet named the St. Ignatius and which later became the Hell Gate, and into the Bitterroot Valley, ancestral home of the Salish or Flathead Indians.

The eager priest didn't let grass grow underfoot. That fall he established St. Mary's Mission,—the little log church which still stands at Stevensville. In the next few years he and his aides accomplished a lot of other "firsts." They split rails and fenced a plot of ground where they planted wheat and potatoes with seed brought from Fort Colville on the Columbia. They brought milk cows from the same source and they improvised a sawmill. A grist mill was built equipped with burs shipped from Belgium. They planted a garden with neat rows of carrots and onions while skeptical Indians perched on the fence wondering at the foolishness of men who would tear up native sod and bury seeds in the raw soil to rot. Then, to the amazement of the

Indians, the plants sprouted and matured. One morning a gardener priest discovered that a row of carrots and one of onions had disappeared during the night. Another night passed and he was startled to find most of the onions back in place, slightly wilted and out of line.

Under Father DeSmet's energetic guidance the little Mission thrived. He kept recruiting workers. However, the Blackfeet were a perpetual menace, and white hunters and trappers formed the habit of wintering in that vicinity. These hardy and profane scalawags had an ungodly influence on the flock, according to Father Palladino, who recorded that "*amid the good seed sown by the Fathers, an enemy scattered cockle which seemed likely for a while to destroy the harvest of souls.*" The priests had other perplexing problems. Twice a year the Salish left the mountains to hunt buffalo on the plains. A favorite route was up the co-ka-la-hish-kit or River-of-the-Road-to-the-Buffalo, now known as the Big Blackfoot. These were absorbing occasions for the red men, involving practically every member of the tribe and requiring no end of preparation. The question was, should the priests accompany them or not? Again, according to Palladino, "The Indians, whilst on the great hunts, were a prey to the wildest excitement which left little, if any, room for religious instruction." Moreover the braves were very likely to tangle with the Blackfeet, and when they took a prisoner, their treatment of the unfortunate wight didn't accord with Christian ethics. The Black Robes decided to stay home.

Harrassed by these annoying conditions, the priests deemed it prudent to close the Mission for a while. In November, 1850, a lease and conditional sales agreement was made with Major John Owen, who took over the improvements and built Fort Owen, which became the nucleus for permanent white settlement in the Bitterroot Valley.



First Episcopal church in Montana Territory. Established at Virginia City by Bishop Tuttle in 1868.

Protestant ministers followed close on the heels of gold-seekers in Virginia City, M. T. They found members of their faith and other sympathetic people glad to participate in the services which they conducted. There were tremendous handicaps to overcome. Housing was a problem; much of the population was restless and transient; Sunday was observed as a gala holiday rather than a day of rest and worship. Baptist, Methodist, and Episcopal clergymen endured discomforts and made great sacrifices to lay the foundation for their present well-organized churches in Montana.

The Right Reverend Daniel Sylvester Tuttle was appointed first Episcopal Bishop of Montana, with jurisdiction in Idaho and Utah. He had to wait four months until he attained the eligible age of thirty before being consecrated in the spring of 1867. His authority extended over some 340,000 square miles with an average population of less than two to each square mile, including Indians and sinners who predominated. Soon afterwards, he left Albany, New York, for his new field and was able to travel by rail as far as North Platte with comparative speed and comfort. At this point connections failed because Indians were harrying the stage line ahead. The enforced delay gave the young churchman an opportunity to observe life on the fringe of the Wild West. The place was crowded with ox and mule teams and their vocal

custodians as well as with profane soldiers and aromatic Indians. As the Bishop felt a great responsibility for the safety of the two assistants and their brides who were accompanying him, he bought a rifle and went out on the prairie to practice. He was a man of peace until he was crowded. As a further precaution, he slept with a revolver under his pillow.

There was another aggravating layover in Denver. From there the Bishop wrote his wife, "*How long we stay here, I don't know. Under God's Providence, it depends first, on the Indians; second, on Wells, Fargo & Co.*" When the redskins finally tired of impeding progress and the stage line operators decided that it was not too hazardous, Bishop Tuttle's little party bounced westward via Concord coach. He arrived in Virginia City, M. T. on a July day. There he found a vast if not too fertile field for evangelical cultivation. He zealously put hand to ministerial plow, thereby turning up some pretty flinty material. This is evidenced in his preface to his *Reminiscences*, in which he gives as one motive for their publication a desire "*to pen an honest record out from a tenderly grateful heart of how kind and good and helpful to a brother man were those who were wrong in belief and those who were wild and wicked in conduct of the men I knew and loved in the mountains.*" The good Bishop was truly Christian in his generous appraisal of the unregenerate whom he encountered. Many of those alleged Nature's noblemen had hearts like diamonds, small and very hard.

Bishop Tuttle spent that first winter in Virginia City, the following year in the larger camp of Helena. He took countless stage and saddle horse trips to hold services in the log cabins of fifty-one communities. Many of those towns, Blackfoot, Ft. Ellis, Ft. Logan, Gallatin City, Pioneer, Nevada, and Silver Bow, have since turned to the stuff that ghosts are made of and then

MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

The old Makaicu manse near Poplar was occupied by the Indian minister Rev. Moses Makay and wife.



dissolved. Some of the congregations over which he had jurisdiction were one thousand miles apart.

The Bishop was big and youthful, with a gorgeous beard and curly hair. In King Arthur's day he would have been a strong, brave, and verie gentyl knight questing the Holy Grail. His sincerity and tolerance made many friends among both reverent and profane, but he won complete public admiration as a result of one of Helena's disastrous fires.

The Bishop's wife had joined him, and they were living on Jackson Street in Helena, where the Pittsburgh Block now stands. A fire started on Main Street and threatened to sweep the Gulch. Match-dry shacks and cabins crackled and collapsed as the conflagration roared up the Gulch under forced draft. Everyone turned out to wage a desperate defense with inadequate weapons. Warehouses were covered with wet blankets, goods and supplies were carried to safety wherever possible, and prominent among the fire fighters were three self-appointed leaders who directed the battle and inspired confidence while working like Trojans themselves. When daylight spread over the charred, smoking ruins, these three heroes stood together atop a sagging roof. Grimy, ragged, battered, scorched, and bleeding, they were Bitterroot Bill, the camp's toughest citizen, Gentleman Joe, professional gambler, and Dan Tuttle, man of the cloth. The Bishop had stood the test by fire. His popularity was assured.

Bishop Tuttle moved his headquarters to Salt Lake City in 1869. His experience in Montana convinced him that a diocese consisting of that Territory with Idaho and Utah as added responsibilities was spreading the benevolence of the Episcopal Church pretty thin. He advocated the appointment of a Bishop for Montana alone and on October 20, 1880, Reverend L. R. Brewer was so designated.

The blase proprietor of the Four Deuces Saloon at Fort Benton was flabbergasted for a moment. It was Sunday, the steamboat FAR WEST had tied up at the river bank a short time before, the NELLIE PECK was expected soon, and his shebang was running full tilt. Freighters, miners, and miscellaneous characters were whooping it up at the bar, chips clinked at the tables, and the dance floor billowed as the boys swung their partners with a right good will. Into this hilarity walked a stocky young man with white vest gleaming under long frock coat and a black, wide-brimmed Stetson topping his blonde poll. If he was a new gambler from down the Missouri there might be trouble,—shooting trouble. Some of the dealers considered the profession overcrowded in Montana.

When the round-faced youth marched up and demanded where he could hold a preaching service, the boss relaxed. Without hesitation he banged on the mahogany for attention and announced: "This bar and the games will be closed for an hour. Go ahead, Preacher." It was the boy evangelist's turn to be nonplussed. He had expected to gather a handful of believers in a school house or home where he could expound and exhort to sympathetic ears. Now he was surrounded by a crowd of bearded ruffians and painted Jezebels who had paused in their wickedness to size him up. There was no hostility or even cynicism in their eyes, just frank wonderment and appraisal more disconcerting than a challenge.

The stranger gulped, mounted a chair and began singing a Moody and Sankey hymn in a mellow baritone. The Professor at the battle-scarred piano groped for the key and swung into a soft accompaniment. When the song was finished, the preacher had them. They demanded more, and before they would let him pause he had given them almost his entire repertoire of hymns and ballads including "Diamonds in the Rough," which was to become his theme song. He was



Old Presbyterian church at Helena, built in 1876 for \$12,000.

showman enough to close with a brief and simple prayer. Then someone demanded his name. When he replied "William Wesley Van Orsdel," they thumped the tables with glee and declared it too big a mouthful. Thenceforth he would be known to all Montanans as Brother Van.

William Wesley Van Orsdel had no ecclesiastical authority to preach, no right to marry, bury, or administer the sacrament. He was a Methodist lay preacher who had been "soundly converted" at a revival meeting near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. When he "felt the call," his maiden aunt, who had been a foster mother to the orphaned boy, tried to persuade him to go to a Methodist college or to the new Theological Seminary in New Jersey, where he could be ordained. He balked. He had always been fascinated by stories of the frontier: Indians, Lewis and Clark, gold rushes, pioneer life. He couldn't wait for an education. In 1870 this twenty-two-year-old, supported by more than a modicum of self assurance, started west with carpet bag and Bible.

Even evangelists have to eat, and boy evangelists of Pennsylvania stock raised on apple strudel and other Dutch provender were likely to be ravenous. He got as far as Oil City, where a relative easily convinced him that his meager funds would have to be augmented if he was to reach his Montana goal. He went to work in the oil fields, but kept his hand in on Sundays by organizing "bush meet-

ings" at which he poured forth the word with an emotional fervor that made converts. He drifted on to Chicago, where he was commended to a minister in Sioux City, and in the spring of 1872 preached and sang his passage to Fort Benton on Captain Mart Coulson's steamboat, FAR WEST.

Leaving Fort Benton, Brother Van hitch-hiked his way to Fort Shaw on the Sun River by military conveyance. There he had his first experience preaching to the stolid red men. From there he got a ride with a freighter to Last Chance Gulch, where he launched a career of evangelism that was to extend over many years and make his name a household one throughout Montana.

He was an energetic extrovert who could have been a master salesman of goods instead of gospel. He was a showman who knew the value of audience participation when he was wrestling with the Devil. His faith was as simple and sincere as his thoughts and the words with which he expressed them. Singing, shouting, whispering, coaxing, he preached his way into the hearts and homes of the people who heard him. He never worried about money. He was one of God's children, and someone always passed the hat.

Powerful exhorters were popular with the people of the time and country, and Brother Van could drub Satan and sinners with the best of them. He rode a big chestnut horse that he had christened Jonathan, and was a welcome guest at isolated ranches where he purveyed news, music, and religion to his delighted hosts. Perhaps some conservative Methodists were inclined to look askance at Brother Van's picturesque garb, which now included cowboy boots, and maybe some of them were shocked by his familiarity with bars and bartenders, for whenever he went to a new town he made it a practice to hold a service in a saloon. He very wisely asserted, "Sin's a sign of vitality. You can do lots more with a lively sinner than you can with a dead saint." So he went where he knew sinners could be found.

Originally built in 1867 at Diamond City, this chapel was moved to White Sulphur Springs in 1880.

For a while he teamed with Thomas Iliff, stern crusador and polished orator. They complemented each other in style and method and became known as the "Heavenly Twins." He joined forces with the scholarly Reverend Francis Asbury Riffin, who preached in preparation for Brother Van's clarion "altar call," which never failed to bring converts into the fold. Brother Van did a great and unselfish work in Montana. His untiring zeal built church after church. As a well-earned recognition of his voluntary services, he was finally ordained at a newly organized Montana Methodist Conference held in Bozeman. He was a colorful, friendly, Christian gentleman, understanding and unassuming. All of Montana mourned when he died on December 19, 1919 in Chinook. A granite boulder marks his grave in the cemetery at Helena.

THE INDIAN'S TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

The Indian language is not easily subject to translation. In communicating with one another the various tribes used a more or less universal language. The following translation of the Twenty-third Psalm, which can easily be interpreted by sign language, was written anonymously. It is from the files of the Montana Historical Library, and is not dated.

The Great Father above is a Shepherd Chief. I am His, and with Him I want not.

He throws out to me a rope, and the name of the rope is Love, and He draws me, and He draws me, and He draws me to where the grass is green and the water not dangerous, and I eat and lie down satisfied.

Sometimes my heart is very weak and falls down, but He lifts it up again and draws me into a good road. His name is Wonderful.

SPRING, 1953



Sometime, it may be very soon, it may be longer, it may be a long, long time, He will draw me into a place between mountains. It is dark there, but I'll draw back not. I'll be afraid not, for it is in there between these mountains that the Shepherd Chief will meet me, and the hunger I have felt in my heart all through this life will be satisfied. Sometimes He makes the love rope into a whip, but afterwards He gives me a staff to lean on.

He spreads a table before me with all kinds of food. He puts His hands upon my head, and all the "tired" is gone. My cup He fills till it runs over.

What I tell you is true, I lie not. These roads that are "away ahead" will stay with me through this life, and afterward I will go to live in the "Big Teepee" and sit down with the Shepherd Chief forever.

"You are to be highly congratulated . . . best wishes for continued and growing success."

Mrs. Rogers Parratt, Managing Director,
California Historical Society, San Francisco.

"To say I enjoyed the Montana Magazine of History very much, is putting it mildly. I read it from cover to cover the first night . . ."

A. T. Rykken, Boring, Oregon.

"It is a great satisfaction to see what a job the Montana Magazine of History is doing. I get three or four other history society publications, none of which seems to me in a class with Montana's."

A. B. Guthrie, Jr., Lexington, Kentucky.

"I think it's a wonderful magazine."

Oscar Thompson, Kirby, Wyoming.

"We think you do fine job and all of our guests enjoy reading the magazine."

Elkhorn Ranch, Bozeman, Montana.

"We are most anxious to continue our subscription."

Regional Director, National Park Service,
Omaha, Nebraska.

"I get more out of the Montana Magazine of History than any of the seven other historical magazines to which I subscribe."

Doc Collins, Denver, Colorado.

"Our Library Board certainly appreciates your magazine. It is a great acquisition to the Montana Shelf."

Ronan (Montana) Library.



BOOK REVIEWS

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF LOUIS RIEL, by W. M. Davidson. The Albertan Printers, Limited. No copyright date indicated. 114 pp. No price indicated.

Reviewed by Norman A. Fox

Here we have a paper-backed booklet, which, according to its publishers, was issued in response to requests from readers of *The Albertan*, (Calgary, Alberta, Canada), where the late Mr. Davidson's biography of Louis Riel appeared in serial form in November, 1951. Davidson, founder of *The Albertan*, had retired from journalism in the 1920's to devote himself to research into the life of Riel, mystic prophet and leader of the Metis in their two abortive rebellions in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The publication of the booklet so coincides with that of Joseph Kinsey Howard's *STRANGE EMPIRE* (William Morrow & Co., 1952) as to make comparisons inevitable.

Both writers put nearly a lifetime into their research on Riel and his Metis; both treat their subject with sympathy and understanding, and the same moral is inherent in their findings: governments would do well to understand fully the problems of minority peoples before formulating legislation involving them. Both writers are highly readable—Davidson in the factual style of the trained journalist as compared to Howard in the more discursive treatment of the social historian.

The real difference is in their approach to the subject that interested them so greatly. Howard is concerned with the

Metis in general and relates their destiny in its various aspects to American-Canadian geopolitics and particularly to the shaping of the Northwest. Davidson's primary interest, however, is Riel the man, and thus his booklet is essentially a biography, though Davidson does relate Riel and his Metis to world movements. But also Davidson keeps his focus on Riel and thus is definitive on such matters as the background of the Riel family, which he traces from France of the seventeenth century to Ireland to New France and then to the high prairies. The host of characters who parade through Howard's pages is in Davidson's booklet, too, but as a Greek chorus in the background, with Riel always to the fore. On some points of research the two writers differ, but these are minor points, too picayunish for mention. The total result is that book and booklet supplement each other nicely. To those who have read *STRANGE EMPIRE* and wish to explore further the Metis history and particularly the participation of Louis Riel, this booklet is recommended reading.

* * *

STAY AWAY, JOE. A novel by Dan Cushman. The Viking Press, New York, 1953. \$3.00.

Reviewed by Anne McDonnell

Last summer I watched a back street scene in a Montana reservation town. The porch, roof and yard across the street were filled with rubbish, old tires, car wheel rims, tin cans, paper boxes, the junk of years accumulation. Outside in the street was a truck and cars into

which many small boys and girls climbed in and out of, or tumbled about in the dusty yard. Young men wandered in and out of the house. Girls in bright summer dresses came and went, all with no indication of orderly family life.

Next door to this shambles was a pleasant bungalow cottage, with a lawn, well-fenced, and every evidence of an orderly, thrifty household. Both were occupied by mixed-bloods; yet as different in appearance as a Tobacco Road shack and a Vermont farmhouse.

This picture came back to me when I read Dan Cushman's novel. He knows and understands the people who make up a minority group in Montana, similar to those described in the Spanish-Americans of "Tortilla Flat." Perhaps their behavior resembles Steinbeck's people more than any other.

This is the "Tortilla Flat" story of Montana. While Cushman's novel does not have the literary quality of Steinbeck's book, it is well-written; an honest sympathetic story about a people he knows and understands. They differ as individuals the same as other groups; a mother who will sacrifice anything to give her daughter a proper wedding; a father, proud of his soldier son, indulgent with his small boys, and considerate of old Gran' Pere, the Cree great-grandfather; and the lazy, immoral no-goods with no thought of what tomorrow may bring.

Nothing is glossed over, the dances with drinking, fighting and general brawling, are honestly pictured. The hap-hazard relationship of certain men and women are not approved but neither are the offenders ostracized. The greatest offense was to be "ashamed of your people."

Mr. Cushman's novel is an April Book-of-the-Month selection. I am sure it will give a great deal of enjoyment and entertainment to most of its readers. Perhaps it will shock others. But it is a good facet of Montana Indian life today, and as such deserves commendation.

SPRING, 1953

UP THE MISSOURI WITH AUDUBON:

The Journal of Edward Harris. Edited by John Francis McDermott. University of Oklahoma Press, 1951. 222 pp., introduction; 41pp.; illustrations. \$3.75.

Reviewed by Claude E. Schaeffer

"Strangest of all adventures in the decades before the Civil War were the naturalists who wandered through the forests and over the Great Plains cataloguing beast and bird and tree and flower. For they," as the editor points out, "suffered pain and privation without the Army officer's hope of promotion or the fur trader's hope of wealth." That the privilege of discovery proved adequate reward for these pioneers of science, however, is well attested in the journal of Edward Harris, gentleman-farmer, student of ornithology and friend of John James Audubon.

The journal records daily events of Harris' ten-months ornithological excursion up the Missouri River in 1843 as a member of Audubon's party. Audubon, who previously had ranged widely through the East and South in search of rare birds and animals, had long dreamed of penetrating the West. To support his venture he elicited the aid of Harris, who was a person of education and means. By the spring of 1843 arrangements had finally been completed for ascending the Missouri. Accompanied by the artist, Isaac Sprague, a taxidermist and a secretary, the amateur ornithologist and the professional bird-painter set out for St. Louis. There, in April, they embarked upon the Fur Company steamer *Omega*, under Captain Sire, and in seven weeks' time arrived at Fort Union. For the next two months the party remained at the fur post as guests of the Superintendent, Alexander Culbertson. In August, Harris and his colleagues, accompanied by the Culbertsons, returned downstream to St. Louis in an especially-built mackinaw boat.

In his day-to-day notations, Harris, like Audubon, focusses his attention—rather narrowly, perhaps, for most read-

ers—upon new and diverse faunal species encountered. This enthusiastic absorption in descriptive zoology is not without its interest for us today, reflecting as it does the scientific spirit of the time. Harris' period, it should be recalled, was still one of exploration and discovery and every naturalist then entering strange and uncharted territory stood, as it were, upon a peak in Darien. Despite its preoccupation with the biotic realm, the journal is occasionally enlivened by comments upon the Missouri frontier. We are thus afforded glimpses of the difficulties of river travel, the activities at the fur posts, fur company officials and employees, Indians both hostile and friendly, and stirring bison hunts. In recording events of the interior West, the Harris account represents an important supplement to Audubon's two-volume journal of the same expedition.

The book is well annotated by the editor, who provided an extensive introductory background based upon Harris' letters, Audubon's journals, etc. A number of appendices are given to scientific reports of Harris, while carefully selected illustrations of drawings and paintings by Sprague, Audubon, Kurz and Catlin heighten the reader's interest. Documentary sources are listed in the footnotes and there is an adequate index. In summary, the Harris Journal represents an interesting and valuable contribution to the annals of historical zoology in the Great Plains.

* * *

ARCHEOLOGY OF EASTERN UNITED STATES, edited by James B. Griffin. The University of Chicago Press, 1952. 392 text pages; 205 figures. \$10.00.

Reviewed by Richard Forbis

Montanans will be surprised to find themselves lumped with easterners; but that is exactly what happens in *Archeology of Eastern United States*, a big book devoted to summaries of archeological areas in the eastern (and western) United States. The reason for putting Montana in the east is that anthropolo-

gists consider the Indian tribes east of the Rockies to have led essentially the same kind of life (in contrast, say, to the Pueblo people).

The scope of the book is magnificent. It starts with a review of the last twenty-five years of archeology, then considers the relation of archeology to ethnology, and also the physical types of Indians. Next, dividing the eastern United States into regions, it covers the Northeast and Central Atlantic states, then moves west across Ohio and Ontario into the Northern Plains. Moving downstream on the Missouri, it meets the Mississippi and follows that stream to Louisiana and Texas and moves east into the Deep South. Of the final chapters, one goes into the archeology of early white settlements; two others into methods of dating (radio-carbon and dendrochronology); and one is a synthesis of the summaries, written by the editor, James B. Griffin. The last part of the book is devoted to pictures. There are 205 fine figures, most of them full-page.

The chapter concerning Montana, "The Northern Plains," was written by William Mulloy, who directed the field-work of the Montana Archeological Survey from 1937 to 1941. He is a prominent specialist in the field and probably the best qualified to write about it.

First Mulloy shows that an old viewpoint—that the Indians did not occupy the Northern Plains until almost historical times—is wrong. Then he divides the prehistory of the region into Early, Middle, and Late Periods. The Early Period begins with Folsom culture and ends with Yuma cultures. The Middle Period, little known, takes in the bottom two levels of Pictograph Cave, near Billings. The Late Period includes late prehistoric sites, like Pictograph Cave's top two levels; and historic tribes: Mandan, Hidatsa, Crow, Arikara, Cheyenne, and, very briefly, Teton Dakota, Assiniboine, Shoshoni, and Blackfoot. Regretably, Mulloy did not have enough room to give detailed information about Picto-

graph Cave; but here, for the first time, is something in print about this important site. There are five full pages of line drawings to add interest and utility to the article.

The first article to consider Montana archeology in broad perspective, "The Northern Plains," will interest all those who take the subject seriously. And it would be hard to beat the book as a concise statement of the archeology of the eastern United States.

NEW GARB

With this issue the *Montana Magazine of History* comes forth in new format. The decision is not a hasty one, although, at first it may seem to be a shock to many of our faithful readers.

In order to keep pace with the new trend in historical journals, to meet rising costs, and to provide what we judge must be a constantly improved product, this change was imperative. It should rightfully have been made with the January issue, but this was impossible. Rather than wait another year we plunged, here and now.

It is not our intention to impair the integrity, quality or authenticity of the magazine. Actually we hope to broaden its horizons and its appeal for countless more readers. Our January issue—for the first time—enjoyed newsstand sales. Readership is at an all-time high, with subscribers in more than half of the states of the Union and in such far-away places as Saudi Arabia, Holland and Korea. But our goal is to be self-sustaining; and that means that we must enjoy more than the largest per-capita circulation of any historical journal west of the Mississippi river—a goal long passed, but still challenging.

We welcome suggestions and criticisms on this issue. Many difficult technical problems have confronted us, and some of them remain unsolved. But our primary object is to present a more attractive, more interesting and more broadly appealing product. Are we succeeding?

SPRING, 1953



ATTIC ARCHIVES

Recent disclosure by the Minnesota Historical Society that long-missing documents relating to the first 1600 miles of the journey of Lewis and Clark were found in a St. Paul attic, has resulted in extensive press and public interest.

In a long feature article announcing the discovery, appearing in the *St. Paul Dispatch* of March 19, 1953, Professor Ernest S. Osgood of the University of Minnesota, who assisted in identification, is quoted as saying:

"These manuscripts are priceless and of great historical importance. This . . . adds much to our knowledge . . . Countless incidents and observations found in these papers are not found in previous published accounts of the expedition. The journal for the winter of preparation at St. Louis is entirely new. Capt. Clark [s] . . . drawing of the keel boat, the Indian mounds and sketch maps, add much to the historical value of the documents."

This magnificent "find" on the part of the Minnesota Historical Society is hailed and applauded by all historians, with a tinge of envy on our part. This Society is well aware that incalculable volumes of raw source materials still exist in Montana attics, in forgotten trunks, in out-of-the-way places, throughout the broad confines of our state.

At every opportunity we urge that people owning or knowing of the location of old documents, letters, journals, dia-

ries or any collection of memorabilia—whether appearing to be of moment or not—please communicate with the Director of this Society.

Perhaps few “finds” could have the “priceless importance” of the Lewis and Clark papers. But we’ll bet our old, moth-beaten buffalo robe against a shiny new Cadillac that much of the State’s most valuable historical source material has not yet been catalogued or inspected by this Society.

The attics of Montana still constitute a virgin storehouse of invaluable historical source material. Let’s all start rummaging with renewed vigor. And please keep the Historical Society of Montana advised of your findings.

* * *

Dr. Jules F. Karlin, Department of History of Montana State University, is doing an exhaustive study of the life of Joseph M. Dixon. One-time Congressman, Senator and Governor, “Joe” Dixon was a public figure of considerable stature and controversy from the day he arrived in Missoula as a young South Carolina lawyer, in 1882, through his term as Governor, beginning in 1921. Dr. Karlin’s commendable efforts can be materially assisted by new source material. He will greatly appreciate correspondence with persons possessing original Dixon papers, correspondence, or any other material bearing on Governor Dixon’s career. Dr. Karlin needs only temporary access to such papers, which he will photostat and return. The Historical Society of Montana is interested in this study and hopes that all persons who possess or know of the existence of useful source material will communicate with Dr. Karlin at Missoula.

* * *

Few people think of the Judith Basin as mining country. Yet the ghost camps of Maiden, Giltedge and Kendall alone yielded some \$18,000,000 in gold.

HOT TIMES

Two disastrous fires swept Helena during its early days as a mining camp. The first conflagration, in 1869, took mostly cabins and false-front structures. By the time of the second, in 1874, many of Last Chance Gulch’s fine edifices were gutted, with the loss approaching a million dollars. Greatest loss was the Montana Territorial library of Col. Wilbur Fisk Sanders, including books, manuscripts and pamphlets—more sorely missed today than they were three-quarters of a century ago.

* * *

Although the *Montana Magazine of History* is published on a calendar year basis, it may be subscribed to at any time during the year, with previous issues guaranteed.

Because of newsstand sales, many persons will see the magazine for the first time with this issue.

A three-dollar check or money order will automatically bring you, your friends or relatives, the current issues for 1953—post haste—and insure a priority for future enjoyable reading in the July and October issues. Besides that, you save a dollar on this basis.

Many new readers are also interested in picking up back issues. We are happy to say that a limited supply of all issues for 1952 are still available, at the regular subscription price. Only Vol. I, Number 1, or January 1951—which had to be reprinted—is still available, at a dollar a copy, first come, first served. April, July and October, 1951 copies are now collector’s items. If you get your hands on any of these, hang on to them. They’re as rare as the Audubon Sheep; although not as extinct!

If you know of persons who should be readers of the *Montana Magazine of History*, please send their names on to us. We’ll be glad to provide them with an informative booklet.

MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

This Spring We Feature
THE CHARLES M. RUSSELL ROOM



Charlie Russell called this spirited water color "A Pair of Outlaws." It's one of more than half a hundred works of the noted Cowboy Artist to be seen in the new Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building at Helena.

In 1952, the Historical Society of Montana raised \$59,000 by public subscription, of which \$50,000 went to buy the Malcolm S. Mackay collection. This comprises most of the work now in this room. This money was raised entirely by public subscription without recourse to any state funds or services. The residue in the fund will be used to maintain this collection and to buy additional Russells. Consisting of 12 oils, 6 water-color and gouaches, 18 pen and inks and 8 bronzes, the Mackay collection has been valued at \$250,000.

In addition, the Society is deeply grateful for the loan or grant of 33 additional Russell works now showing in this gallery. Special appreciation is extended to Col. Wallis Huidekoper of Big Timber, Mr. C. R. Smith of New York City, Mr. Ernest Klepetko of Lago Colony, Netherlands West Indies, The Montana Stock-

growers' Association, Mr. C. V. Rubottom of Livingston, Miss Maude and Miss Florence Fortune of Helena, Mr. and Mrs. Del Lichtenburg of Ennis, and the Mackay family of Roscoe, Montana and Tenafly, New Jersey.

OTHER FACILITIES

In addition to this splendid collection of Russell art, visitors are invited to avail themselves of the other major public facilities of the Historical Society of Montana. These include: The Historical Library, which houses one of the finest rare book, newspaper and manuscript collections in the West; The Formal Historical Museum; The Informal Museum; The Fine Arts Division Gallery, where shows of contemporary arts and crafts are changed frequently. You are welcome to use all of these free facilities.